EHRENREICH & FLETCHER ON SOCIALISM

THE Nation.

SUPREME COURT PICKS

DAHLIA LITHWICK

PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

LANI GUINIER

TOM GEOGHEGAN

and others

THE KGB IN THE USA

D.D. GUTTENPLAN

THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

IMAGINING AN ECONOMY THAT PUTS PEOPLE FIRST

WILLIAM GREIDER

MAY 25, 2009
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Letters

Silver Lining

Albany, N.Y.
Katha Pollitt's contention that New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver made rape charges against a senior staff member "go away" is untrue ["Subject to Debate," May 4]. When an Assembly staffer came to the Assembly in 2001 with allegations that she had been the victim of a sexual assault by a senior staff member, we urged her to file a criminal complaint with the Albany Police Department or the Albany County district attorney. She declined to bring her complaint to law enforcement, and therefore charges were never filed.

Speaker Silver is dedicated to ensuring that every woman in this state feels safe, and he has devoted much of his career to protecting the rights of victims of sexual abuse, strengthening laws against rape and sexual violence, and providing resources for the treatment of survivors.
Dan Weiller, *press secretary to the Speaker New York State Assembly*

Pollitt Replies

New York City
I wrote that Sheldon Silver made rape charges against Michael Boxley go away "according to the alleged victim," Elizabeth Crothers. That is indeed what she said. Dan Weiller makes it sound as if Crothers's choice not to go to the police tied Silver's hands, but in fact her remarks were about Silver's role in the Assembly's internal investigation. According to the *New York Times*, a lawsuit filed by Boxley's second victim, "Jane Doe," asserts that Crothers asked Silver to appoint an independent investigator to look into the case; Silver declined. Instead he assigned the case to a lawyer who was subordinate to Boxley, interrupted that lawyer's interview with Crothers several times by phone and, before the investigation was concluded, released a public statement expressing his "utmost personal confidence in Boxley." (The investigation was inconclusive, and Boxley stayed on Silver's staff until led away in handcuffs after the second rape charge.) Also according to the *Times*, "In 2006, Mr. Silver and the Assembly leadership agreed to pay $500,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by Jane Doe accusing Mr. Silver of failing to properly investigate the Crothers case and of tolerating a culture of sexual harassment in the Assembly."
Katha Pollitt

Michelle, Ma Belle

Beaverton, Ore.
Re "Mad About Michelle": Go, Katha Pollitt! ["Subject to Debate," April 20]
Julia Sathler

Chelsea, Mich.
Thank you for telling it like it is about Michelle Obama. Her mother and brother are terrific, too.
Gerane Weinreich

Niagara Falls, N.Y.
Katha Pollitt states exactly how Michelle Obama should be appreciated: she's a great role model for all women—young, middle-aged and old.

And bless her beautiful arms, too!
Linda Kremer-Duguay

Brooklyn, N.Y.
Katha Pollitt's creaky gender war–era polemics offer younger readers a valuable window into why men and women in their 50s and 60s seem so miserable. Having grown up with working mothers and grandmothers, we find Pollitt's idea that women might venture out into the world and find jobs of their own—and even pursue their "wilder dreams"—refreshingly quaint. Next thing you know, women will be playing rock music onstage, wearing jeans and having orgasms, just like men.

The pursuit of personal happiness by ordinary men and women who must work to balance the demands of careers, kids and

(continued on page 24)

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Following Souter

It goes without saying that President Obama's nominee to replace Justice David Souter on the Supreme Court should be a person of extraordinary intelligence, integrity and moral vision. And since archconservative justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito are in their 50s, it wouldn't hurt if the first Democratic appointee in fifteen years is relatively young and in good health. It should also go without saying that the president has the prerogative and political capital to nominate a justice who agrees broadly with his interpretation of the Constitution as a document that protects "people who may be vulnerable in the political process, the outsider, the minority… those who don't have a lot of clout" and grants a right to privacy. Luckily, there is no shortage of candidates who meet these criteria.

EDITORIAL

But what else should President Obama seek in a nominee? We asked a panel of legal experts to name their ideal Supreme Court justice. The selections (printed below and online at TheNation.com) are varied, from acknowledged front-runners to unlikely yet sterling legal advocates. Whomever Obama selects, the nominee will face loud opposition from the right, which has spent decades cultivating a reactionary theory of the Constitution and denigrating anything more enlightened as "legislating from the bench." At stake here are not just decisions on issues like abortion, affirmative action, free speech and gay rights but the very status of the Court as an equal branch of government—the last and most dedicated guardian of the rule of law. During the Bush years, when the president and Congress dispensed with the writ of habeas corpus for detainees, the Court was the only branch of government that refused to go along. Justice Souter voted with the majority in those cases; his replacement should have no less reverence for the law.

—The Editors

Dahlia Lithwick (senior editor, *Slate*): Choosing just one dream candidate to replace Justice Souter is like eating just one jelly bean. The whole field is thrilling. But a candidate I'm excited about is Stanford Law School's Pamela Karlan. Karlan is young—born in 1959—but the crucial quality she would bring to the court is an epic constitutional vision: a story about progressive American jurisprudence as inspiring as the stories of originalism and textualism offered by Antonin Scalia and John Roberts. Karlan is co-author of a new book, *Keeping Faith With the Constitution*, that roots the liberal theory of judicial interpretation in the text, structure and history of the document and returns the Constitution to ordinary Americans. Karlan is, like Scalia, a gifted writer and brilliant legal thinker, with a deep, broad understanding that spans legal fields. If pure intellectual candlepower is as critical to President Obama as I suspect, she should be at or near the top of his list. I'd be remiss not to add that she may well be the funniest woman I know.

Finally, Karlan has that quality that Obama calls "empathy." She gets it. As founding director of Stanford's Supreme Court Litigation Clinic, she has helped represent defendants from criminal and civil rights matters, for free. She is an outside-the-Beltway, off-the-bench human who could breathe fresh air and fresh energy into the liberal wing of the Court.

Tom Geoghegan (lawyer and author of *See You in Court: How the Right Made America a Lawsuit Nation*): Well, let's say three appointments are coming up. First, I'd pick Earl Warren, because we need a strong governor used to getting his or her way—someone used to dominating a

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This week at TheNation.com

News & Analysis

Robert Dreyfuss on Afghanistan & Pakistan

Barbara Crossette on Nepal

Aziz Huq on David Souter

Slideshow: Supreme Court: 'Think Outside the Box'

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Rep. Donna Edwards on healthcare

JoAnn Wypijewski on teen sexting

cabinet meeting. Second, I'd pick Hugo Black because I'd like to see a cracker barrel politician fanatically committed to the philosophy of Footnote 4 of *Carolene Products*—a belief that judicial review exists to make the will of the people the law of the land, to be limited only by the most expansive possible reading of the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Third, I'd pick William O. Douglas, because the Court could use a libertarian free spirit in an age when the government might try to squat on the human genome.

Secretly, in the Oval Office, the president should make each nominee take a blood oath to reverse *San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez* and promise to rule that under the Equal Protection Clause every state should provide equal funding for children in public schools. What better way to start than to end the decision that ended the era of the Warren Court?

I would also make each nominee promise to write opinions no longer than those of Warren, Black and Douglas—let's go back to opinions of five pages instead of fifty. Of course, if Obama picks these three Dead White Males, there is no need for them to be dead or white or male. They would tell us that if they could.

Ian Haney Lopez (John H. Boalt Professor of Law, University of California, Berkeley): Many scoff at the clamor for President Obama to nominate a woman to the Supreme Court or a minority or someone from a non-elite background. They dismiss in particular the enthusiasm of ostensible identity commissars who seem to support Judge Sonia Sotomayor, the daughter of working-class Puerto Ricans, as the triple threat of identity candidates.

Yet identity does matter—if indirectly. Yes, the judicial apotheosis of someone affiliated with disfavored groups would help repudiate negative stereotypes (it turns out, Latinas can do more than clean houses). True, such ascension would add to the law's legitimacy (further burnishing the belief in the Americano Dream). All fair enough. But at stake is a seat on the Supreme Court; far and away the most important criterion for selecting among various technically superb candidates must be intellectual and moral vision.

Which is the key reason identity matters. The central point is not to provide diverse role models, and it's certainly not to maximize differences of every stripe. The essential thrust of identity politics is to accord special consideration to race, gender and class (plus sexual orientation and disability)—because these constitute core, persistent, unjust hierarchies. Biography is not intellectual destiny; group membership is not epistemological fate. Nevertheless, ties to the central marginalized identities in American life surely encourage sustained engagement with inequality. Judge Sotomayor deserves our support not because of *who* she is but because of what she thinks—especially about the most injurious forms of structural injustice in the United States: race, gender and class.

David Cole (Georgetown University Law Center professor): My first choice would be Calvin Trillin, who would bring to the Court a much-needed sense of Poetic Justice. He has the experience, judgment and demeanor to find new rhymes for Scalia, Thomas, Roberts and Alito, with whom he could be expected to dissent reliably, succinctly and with panache. And given how little *The Nation* pays him, he might jump at the job.

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As far as I know, Trillin lacks a law degree, and strict constructionists might find this disqualifying. But he does tell a great crime story.

Assumin' Trillin is not willin', former dean of Yale Law School and Obama's nominee for legal adviser to the State Department, Harold Koh, would be my choice. A brilliant lawyer and scholar with experience in the executive branch, Koh is carefully attuned both to the challenges of balancing national security and civil liberties, and to the importance of acknowledging that in an increasingly globalized world, we must be cognizant of how our laws and actions interact with those of the rest of the world.

Garrett Epps (law professor, University of Baltimore): The Rehnquist Court was the most Western Court we've ever had; for America's Native people, that was not a good thing. The unthinking background of many older white Westerners includes a helping of contempt for their Indian neighbors, and the Rehnquist years completed the transition of the Court from a protector of Native people to an all-but-avowed enemy of their rights. In *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, for example, Arizona rancher's daughter Sandra Day O'Connor held that the US government could proceed with a logging road that the government's own study showed would destroy the traditional religion of Native people nearby. Rehnquist led a decades-long, largely successful crusade to strip tribal governments of any jurisdiction over white people—even those living on reservation land. Obama has an appointee at hand who could begin to mend this sorry record: John Echohawk, a legendary lawyer who has run the Native American Rights Fund in Boulder, Colorado, for more than thirty years. Echohawk is a 64-year-old Pawnee and was the first Native graduate of the University of New Mexico Law School. NARF has represented tribal governments in their ongoing fight to reclaim shreds of sovereignty from federal and state governments. Echohawk was a member of Obama's transition team at the Interior Department. The appointment of Echohawk would begin, after 230 years, to bring balance to the Court.

Noted.

SICK DAYS: With hundreds of schools closed because of the **H1N1** flu virus, parents across the nation have found themselves in a bind. Most parents work—just three children in ten have a stay-at-home parent—and many do not have the right to paid sick days. This includes nearly half of all workers—59 million people—and 86 percent of food service workers. Workers without job-protected paid sick days know that taking time off could put their jobs at risk—and that's not a risk many can afford to take in this dismal economic climate. Yet we keep hearing that if people don't feel well, they shouldn't go out and potentially give others H1N1.

In the immediate wake of the swine flu outbreak, **President Obama** was slow to acknowledge this problem, and he only requested that parents and businesses think about "contingency plans" if kids get sick and must stay home. Then on May 2, in his weekly address, he urged employers to "allow infected employees to take as many sick days as necessary." It is hoped that employers will do the right thing and pay workers who are out sick as a result of the flu. But there's no penalty for those who choose not to pay workers in this situation, or for those who refuse workers any time off at all.

That's why the Obama administration and Congress should go beyond encouraging words and require employers to provide job-protected paid sick days. A good place to start is the Healthy Families Act. Representative **Rosa DeLauro** plans to reintroduce this legislation in May. The bill would guarantee that workers can earn up to seven paid sick days a year to recover from an illness or care for a sick family member. That's the kind of response this incipient pandemic calls for.

HEATHER BOUSHEY

SEEGER AT 90: "You outlasted the bastards, man," **Bruce Springsteen** said as the crowd roared. That was my favorite line at the rollicking concert celebrating **Pete Seeger**'s 90th birthday. There were other uplifting, astonishing moments during the five-hour concert May 3 at Madison Square Garden, which Seeger only OK'd because it raised funds for **Hudson River Sloop Clearwater**—a nonprofit he started in 1969 to clean up his beloved, polluted Hudson River.

Fifteen thousand people of all ages danced, clapped and sang along as Seeger did a soaring version of "Amazing Grace" and the saintly-looking **Joan Baez** sang "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" **Ruby Dee** entranced with her reading of a poem for peace written by Seeger's uncle. In between, a startlingly youthful **Emmylou Harris** recounted correspondence she'd had with Seeger as a young folk singer; **Tom Morello** and **Taj Mahal** teamed up on "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy"; and **John Mellencamp** offered up "If I Had a Hammer."

Toward the end, Springsteen announced to the crowd, "Pete's gonna come out…. He's gonna look like your granddad if your granddad could kick your ass." Seeger looked all of 25—of strong backbone and spirit and moxie and with keen eyes, which are the stronger for having seen the best, and the worst, of our country's history. As Springsteen said, Pete has a "stubborn, nasty, defiant optimism"; he's like "the stealth dagger through the heart of our country's illusions about itself." Springsteen also talked about growing up in a town that endured race riots. He said Seeger transformed "This Land Is Your Land" from a labor anthem to a civil rights anthem, and he described preparing for their duet of the song at **Obama**'s inauguration. Seeger said to him then, "I know I want to sing all the verses, all the ones that Woody wrote, even the two that usually get left out."

"There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me/Sign was painted, it said private property/But on the back side it didn't say nothing/That side was made for you and me." It seemed that there was enough humanity in that one hall to fill all of the nation with amazing grace. As New Jersey's and the nation's bard summed it up: "Pete sings all the verses, all the time, especially the ones we'd like to leave out of our history as a people." KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL

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Linda Hirshman (lawyer and author of *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World*): Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, yawn. A sitting judge with uninteresting decisions to her credit and a dean so bland she got along at Harvard Law School. The Democrats control Congress and the presidency for the first time since the 1970s. This is the moment to appoint big, deep thinkers who will lay the groundwork for a true liberal jurisprudence. Obama's inaugural address asked: are Americans prepared to return to their roots as sturdy citizens of a democratic republic? The Court has a crucial role to play in shaping the Constitution to that end.

In this core task, one candidate stands clearly above the rest: Ronald Dworkin, Queens Counsel and Fellow of the British Academy; professor of jurisprudence at University College, London, and New York University School of Law; and former professor of jurisprudence at Oxford University. He is the leading expositor of reading the Constitution to ensure the self-determination of autonomous individuals and to hold citizens accountable for their moral actions. On my litmus test—why does the Constitution protect abortion?—he offers an explanation so superior it boggles the mind that we're still debating. As citizens, women have a right to personal physical integrity, Dworkin brilliantly sees, "crucial to the development of personality and sense of moral responsibility."

Old white man, you say? At 77 he is so vibrant he just swept the floor with the "minimalism" so trendy among the Cass Sunstein set, in *The New York Review of Books*. Five years of Ronald Dworkin would be worth fifty from anyone else. Think of the short tenure of Robert Jackson. But if you really want a woman, let's have someone who's cracked the code about how the law acts on women, not just a physical woman. That's easy, too: Catharine MacKinnon.

Herman Schwartz (law professor at the American University): I would be happy with any of several candidates, including Stanford law professor Kathleen Sullivan, Pamela Karlan and Sonia Sotomayor. I would prefer, however, that we not have another appellate judge on the Supreme Court. Appellate judges, on the appeals courts and the Supreme Court, do not deal with people, only with paper and lawyers making arguments. They lead isolated, privileged lives and rarely encounter ordinary people and their problems. For some of the same reasons I hesitate to suggest academics, although because of their continual interaction with a wide variety of students from many backgrounds, their isolation from ordinary life is less.

Nevertheless, my overall preference is for Governor Jennifer Granholm of Michigan. She is an honors graduate of both University of California, Berkeley, and Harvard Law School, which means that she probably has the intellectual capacity to serve, obviously an essential qualification. She has been a federal prosecutor, Wayne County corporation counsel and Michigan's first female attorney general. Equally important, as governor she has been forced to deal with the problems of ordinary people in difficult times. That kind of broad experience is essential to service on a court whose decisions affect so much of our lives.

Lani Guinier (Bennett Boskey Professor, Harvard Law School): At this historic moment, President Obama should contemplate appointing a person with the capacity and inclination to become a powerful voice of democratic dissent. The biggest challenge facing any Obama nominee is that Republicans, although now out of power in Congress and the White House, still enjoy a supermajority on the Supreme Court. Because Obama's nominee will likely reflect her judicial philosophy primarily in dissent, I propose that he consider appointing someone whose background includes dealing with a constituency of accountability. Such a person, by virtue of experience and practice, could use her position to speak in a voice that is easy to understand and with a tone of urgency that is hard to resist.

While local activists do not depend on members of the Court to authorize their protests, the passionate voice of a dissenting justice can encourage, frame and help legitimate an alternative narrative of justice. Justices who dissent from the bench can engage ordinary citizens (not just lawyers and judges) in a conversation about significant yet competing democratic values.

This is not a call for judicial activism, because as a dissenter, the justice is not wielding the coercive power of the state. Should dissenters on the left or right succeed in this way, it is because We the People become the real democratic activists. And that is precisely what happened, for example, after Justice Ginsburg, a leading advocate for women's equality before becoming a judge, spoke out in her oral dissent in the Lilly Ledbetter pay equity case. Although she did not convince her conservative male colleagues that the concept of equal pay for equal work was a fundamental American value, she had a larger audience in mind. She spoke colloquially and frankly to ordinary women, who know how hard it is to raise questions when, like Lilly Ledbetter, you are the first woman in an all-male workforce. Members of Congress as well as national and local activists responded, pushing back against the cramped interpretation of the Court majority. Ultimately, Ginsburg's dissent was vindicated—not because her colleagues changed their minds but because a grassroots coalition mobilized to support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the first major piece of legislation that President Obama signed.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

The Defection of Arlen Specter

Voilà, a GOP defector!
He's unbeloved Arlen Specter—
As kindly as a rent collector
Or Hannibal, the hungry Lecter.
(Remember when we watched him hector
Anita Hill, so he'd deflect her
From Thomas sniffing her as nectar?)
The Dems say, "Welcome to our sector.
Obama now is your protector."
A vote's a vote.

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Time for the Reckoning?

COMMENT

In June 2008 Eric Holder told a packed house at the American Constitution Society's annual convention that in the wake of the Bush administration's authorization of torture, secret electronic surveillance and detentions without trial, "we owe the American people a reckoning." In the past few weeks, the United States moved several small steps closer to that reckoning. What form it will take is much debated, but there can be little doubt that momentum for some form of official accountability is growing.

President Obama has been deeply ambivalent on the subject. On the one hand, he immediately halted authorization of what Bush euphemistically called "enhanced interrogation techniques" and recently released four previously secret Bush Justice Department memos that had authorized CIA agents to slam suspects' heads against walls, confine them to cramped boxes for hours at a time, deprive them of sleep for more than a week and waterboard them repeatedly (in Khalid Shaikh Mohammed's case, 183 times in a single month).

On the other hand, Obama has insisted that the CIA agents who employed these methods should not be prosecuted and has advised members of Congress against launching a commission to investigate the abuses. He said he prefers to look forward, not backward, and doesn't want distractions from the many other items on his agenda. But when his chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, went further and announced that no one would be prosecuted for torture, Obama swiftly backtracked, explaining that the decision as to who, if anyone, would be prosecuted would be made by Attorney General Holder.

The issue of accountability for torture is not going away. On April 28 a court of appeals in San Francisco revived a civil lawsuit by torture victims against Jeppesen Dataplan, a Boeing subsidiary that handled flight planning and logistical support for the Central Intelligence Agancy's extraordinary rendition program. The Bush administration had successfully argued in district court that because the CIA program was officially labeled secret—although its existence had been emblazoned across the world's front pages for years—the lawsuit had to be dismissed. The Obama administration, to the appeals court's surprise, maintained that position after it took office. The court unanimously rejected the argument, explaining that it would impermissibly allow the executive branch to immunize "the CIA and its partners from the demands and limits of the law." Noting that governments often classify evidence to avoid embarrassment rather than to protect true national secrets, the court insisted that respect for the separation of powers required the courts to take a hard look at the legitimacy of any claims of secrecy.

Until now claims of secrecy have served as a kind of "nuclear option" for the government, enabling it to evade responsibility for its wrongdoings. The Bush administration relied on such claims to block efforts to hold it liable for torture, rendition and warrantless wiretapping of Americans. The appeals court decision revives the possibility that civil lawsuits could provide redress for the grave abuses of human rights committed in the "war on terror."

The day after the court of appeals ruled, another judicial decision a continent and an ocean away advanced the cause of accountability even more dramatically. On April 29 Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón—famous for having indicted Gen. Augusto Pinochet, former head of Chile's military government, for torture and other crimes against humanity—announced that he had instituted a formal and wide-ranging criminal investigation of the Bush administration's authorization of torture. Garzón is proceeding under a principle of universal jurisdiction, which provides that certain crimes—including torture—are so heinous that the whole world has a legitimate stake in prosecuting them, regardless of where and by whom they were committed.

The Obama administration sought to head off the Spanish probe and persuaded Spain's attorney general to oppose it. But in Spain criminal investigations and indictments are instituted by judges, not politicians. (The Spanish government had also opposed the indictment of Pinochet.) Judge Garzón has repeatedly demonstrated his independence. And the facts here are indisputable—Bush administration officials at the highest levels specifically authorized waterboarding, an infamous form of torture, and aggressively used secrecy and other means (including the destruction of CIA videotapes) to cover up their wrongdoing.

The only thing that can stop Garzón now is a formal criminal investigation within the United States. That, after all, is what the Convention Against Torture unequivocally demands. On May 5 the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* reported that the Justice Department's internal ethics office would probably refer the lawyers to their state bar associations for discipline but would not recommend prosecution. The ultimate decision is Holder's.

Whether accountability for torture should take the form of a commission of inquiry or a prosecution has been the subject of much heated debate, but the options are not mutually exclusive. It is essential, however, that there be some official reckoning. It could take the form of prosecutions, professional sanctions, legislation or commission findings. The important point is that we cannot look forward with integrity if we are unwilling to look back responsibly.

DAVID COLE

Managing Flu

The hyperbolic response to the recent bout with swine flu reveals how much our antiquated public health policy motivates fear. Neither the number of deaths attributed to the H1N1 virus nor the geographic distribution of cases makes this a worrisome epidemic. But with flu policy guided by a horror vision of a return of the "Spanish flu," which caused tens of millions of deaths worldwide in 1918, even the present mild outbreak looks like a fearsome challenge.

Despite a wealth of knowledge not available in 1918, we still deal with each new outbreak of flu as if the virus were an invad-

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ing army and the US population its target. We meet each year's flu with immunization, "stockpiles" of Tamiflu and a command and control center at the CDC. A few programs normally held in reserve, like school closings and airport screenings, are brought up to the front lines when we're feeling particularly menaced. Each year, we win a Pyrrhic victory—there are piles of casualties on our side, but the enemy deserts the field. Then, when flu returns the following year, we do the same thing all over again.

COMMENT

The traditional armamentarium works against flu only in the limited sense of reducing casualties in developed countries. It doesn't work if we recognize that our policy of arming ourselves against communicable diseases allows us to ignore them when they devastate the world's poor. It doesn't work if we consider the costs to poor farmers' economic welfare and physical health when flocks or herds are slaughtered to protect rich-country livestock from flu. And it fails utterly if we count the long-term costs of letting flu viruses infest herds and flocks, recombine and start the cycle again.

In order to break out of this cycle and invigorate a broader approach to public health, we must dispense with the naïve notion that fighting flu is an annual battle and begin to think in terms of management. Whether we want to change this situation because it threatens us or out of a deeper sense of obligation to the world's welfare, we have to regard flu as a resident of an ecosystem humans share with animals. We have to equip ourselves to understand not only how flu crosses species barriers but how the many interactions in a complex system of agriculture, climate, land use, food production, commerce and human behavior influence the development of new flu strains.

Flu viruses drift in a wide web of connections among their many hosts: humans, swine, birds and some wild animals (waterfowl, ferrets, feral cats and others). The links in the web are sometimes intimate and direct—farmers breathe the same air as their pigs, for instance. Often, though, viral connections are mediated by subtle forces in the environment: shifts in climate alter species balances and bring once-separated animal populations into contact; the endless competition between strains of microbes (bacteria, notably) affects the health of animals and humans, and that microscopic struggle responds to minuscule changes in social ties within or between species.

The dimensions and connectivity of this wide web are further affected by economic and political factors that normally receive short shrift in discussions of (and research on) human disease. Wealth disparities can force poor farmers to raise more stock on less land. When farmers live close to the animals they raise and slaughter, microbial dynamics shift and create opportunities for viral movement. When the poor are displaced altogether, a globally mobilized proletariat offers a vehicle for the spread of contagion far more worrisome than flu-infected travelers on airplanes.

We monitor our industrialized food production facilities in the hopes that it will protect us from flu and other pathogens at home. But we can no longer imagine that there is any clear distinction between "home" and "away." Indeed, we're learning that the worldwide reach of the food industry enables the transmission of viruses, flu in particular. When transport routes are farther flung and more people and goods traffic between rural habitats and cities, human populations become less isolated. The SARS outbreak reminded us that the most modern parts of our most modern cities are no longer very far away from wild-animal markets in rural villages—and thus to the diseases the animals in those markets carry.

But the outbreak of swine flu is not a near-miss doomsday scenario. We should not succumb to anxieties about modern life that make us think that our attempts to control nature have invited catastrophe. It is not the imaginary danger of infectious apocalypse that should drive us to change; it's the futility and shortsightedness of merely defending America against "pandemics." We do not need to go back to subsistence farming to protect ourselves from the next outbreak of disease. But we must rethink our outmoded assumptions about public health.

Paradoxically, to make a great gain against flu, we have to stop battling it and start managing it. We are already making the metaphoric shift from threat defense to multifaceted management with regard to the environment. To do the same with disease will require international conventions that protect the interests of farmers, particularly in poor countries; tougher regulation of land use, water access and food production and distribution; and consideration of virus management in the development of trade and environmental policies. Pharmaceutical companies and agribusiness shouldn't set hygienic and trade standards; we'll need to find a more positive role for governments in regulation. We might stop depending on Tamiflu as a weapon, although we aren't going to stop needing doctors and nurses—the medical and veterinary professions should help craft a more comprehensive approach to the environment, agriculture and health.

President Obama took a step in the right direction on May 5 when he announced a $63 billion commitment to international health. "The world is interconnected, and that demands an integrated approach to global health," he said. The strategy, in part a response to the swine flu scare, will fund efforts to deal with AIDS, malaria and TB and add financing for maternal and child health and other programs. The details remain to be seen, though, especially in regard to how flu will be handled. Turning the global plan into real programs will mean knitting together the complex strands of economics, agriculture and health.

If the new global health plan means that pragmatism and internationalism will enter the public health arena worldwide, this is the time to jump from the defense-minded dogma of twentieth-century public health to a twenty-first-century conceptualization. In order to stop the hysteria about flu and limit its many costs, we have to manage the natural web within which it lives, not just skirmish with it. PHILIP ALCABES

Philip Alcabes, the author of Dread: How Fear and Fantasy Have Fueled Epidemics From the Black Death to Avian Flu *(PublicAffairs), is associate professor of urban public health at Hunter College, the City University of New York.*

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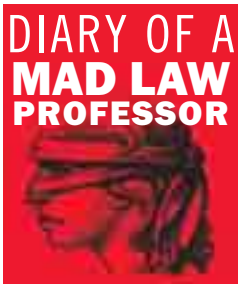
Patricia J. Williams

Boxing Days

As Supreme Court Justice David Souter fades into the sunset of quirkily Hawthorne-esque New England character types, the Obama administration must gear itself up for what is likely to be its first significant fight. Yes, those of us on the left have cause for relief that this life-tenure opportunity bestows, after a long drought, the gift of a justice with wisdom and mercy. But the Supreme Court decides issues that will shape the course of American law for generations; all the favorite hot-button, "litmus test" issues of the foreseeable future will be negotiated by the judiciary sooner or later: immigration, reproductive rights, surveillance and wiretapping, equal pay, the power of unions, the right to privacy (particularly in still-nascent technological fields like genetic snooping) and discrimination not just on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion but also in the fields of disability access, lending laws and health insurance. If there is any unanimity in the Republican Party, the Supreme Court is the one area where its fiercest passion will be manifest.



As of this writing, the names circulated as Souter's most likely replacement are all thoughtful, well-informed, spectacularly well-qualified women: Solicitor General Elena Kagan, Second Circuit Judge Sonia Sotomayor and Seventh Circuit Judge Diane Wood. This is good news, but still… no one should underestimate the contest that the choice will engender.

On one side of the ring is the chair of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Patrick Leahy. As an old-style, Kennedy-type Vermont liberal, he voted against President George W. Bush's (ultimately successful) nomination of Alabama Attorney General William Pryor to the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in 2004. Pryor, an avid proponent of "states' rights," actively opposed almost every major piece of civil rights legislation of the 1960s and beyond—from voting rights to disability rights to reproductive rights, including the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

Nevertheless, Leahy's opposition to Pryor somehow converted him and other Democrats into the convenient target of a Republican campaign characterizing opposition to Pryor as "anti-Catholic." Culmination? That infamous confrontation on the Senate floor when Leahy expressed outrage at being called a bad Catholic and Cheney hurled a retort that is multifariously remembered as to its grammatical embellishment, but unanimously agreed to have included at least two crucial words, to wit: "fuck" and "yourself."

On to the other side of the ring stands Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III, the distinguished senator from Alabama. Pryor replaced Sessions as Alabama's attorney general when Sessions was elected to the Senate in 1996. That one could stand in for the other is not a surprise. Pryor and Sessions share a certain sensibility, although Sessions has been even more colorfully intrepid than anyone in our narrative thus far. For example, Sessions is alleged to have called the NAACP "un-American" and to have said that he didn't think the Ku Klux Klan was so bad—at least not until it was revealed that some of that august membership might have smoked marijuana.

To make a long story short, Senator Sessions is now the ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee and so will lead the party's pack-attack upon whichever candidate President Obama puts forward. Sessions achieved that heady status only days ago, when Arlen Specter renounced his Republican Party membership and became a born-again Democrat, losing his committee seniority. Serving as second-ranking members on the Democratic and Republican sides respectively are Herbert Kohl of Wisconsin and Orrin Hatch of Utah, who, along with Leahy and Specter, were members of the committee when Anita Hill testified at the Clarence Thomas hearings.

Recently, Senator Specter said that not a day goes by that Republican colleagues don't take him to task for voting against Robert Bork's nomination in 1987. The residual bitterness from that battle has lived on to such a degree that the word "Borking" has worked its way into the Oxford English Dictionary with a decidedly partisan cast, meaning to savage, to vilify, to defame. This definition reflects Bork's fury about the opposition he faced from every major civil rights and women's group. The grounds for that opposition were summarized in a briefing book that Bork called "world class…scurrility." That brief was known as "The Biden Report"—so named because Joe Biden was chair of the Judiciary Committee at the time.

All this is to say that there is history among these players, and axes to grind. Appointing a Supreme Court justice is one of the most important powers of the presidency, and given the delicate balance of its current makeup, there is much at stake. My choice would be Elena Kagan. She is a graduate of Princeton and Harvard Law School and also holds a master's degree in philosophy from Oxford. Kagan is a superlative administrative law scholar and extremely well respected by a wide constituency of viewpoints. She began her academic career as a tenured professor at the University of Chicago Law School (hardly a bastion of liberal thought). From there, she moved on to Harvard, where she became its first female dean—and a highly effective one to boot (which is even more of an accomplishment considering the famously fractious nature of that faculty). Recently, Obama named her solicitor general of the United States—and again, she became the first woman to hold that post. Most important, I believe that Kagan has the intellect, the toughness and the fair-mindedness to be a great justice. She also has the dignity, commanding knowledge and quick-wittedness to rise above (or duck below) whatever recombinant ugliness the assembled partisans are likely to lob her way during the confirmation process. ■

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Eric Alterman

David Broder: Eyes Wide Shut

More than eighty years ago, in his argument with Walter Lippmann about the proper role of the press in a democracy, John Dewey warned that "a class of experts is inevitably so removed from common interests as to become a class with private interests and private knowledge."

It would be difficult to imagine a more telling—and disturbing—manifestation of Dewey's prediction than the current torture debate in Washington. Even after the disgraceful performance of so many armchair warriors during the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, who would have dared predict the willingness, nay, eagerness, of respected journalists and pundits to argue in favor of purposeful ignorance? Sadly, many of them have shown less interest in potential war crimes committed by the Bush administration than little Misha Lerner, the Jewish Primary Day School fourth grader who quizzed Condoleezza Rice about her inability to explain the legality of these policies to a group of Stanford students.

While many have made the case to varying degrees, Peggy Noonan made it most explicitly: "Some things in life need to be mysterious," she said of America's role in torturing terrorist suspects. "Sometimes you need to just keep walking." And while defenders of the insider establishment may note, as a mitigating factor, that Noonan is less a journalist than an ex-Reagan flack who plays a journalist on the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page and ABC's *This Week*, what, then, to say about David Broder? The "dean" of the Washington press corps sets a tone for many of his colleagues and represents a goal to which many if not most of them aspire. He, too, advises his colleagues to keep walking, eyes wide shut.

Broder mocked his colleagues following the 2004 election for writing that "the forces of darkness" were taking over the country, chortling that America did not face "another dark age." He's changed his mind, but not his tune. Yes, the dean admits, it turns out that we have just passed through "one of the darkest chapters of American history." But never mind that. Anybody interested in just what took place during this period is guilty, according to the apparently telepathic pundit, of "an unworthy desire for vengeance." Sure, Broder admits, that old-fashioned notion of democratic "accountability" offers a "plausible-sounding rationale" for an investigation. But Broder wants none of it. He worries that it would lead to "endless political warfare." He says the torture memos "represented a deliberate, and internally well-debated, policy decision, made in the proper places." And most of all, he is afraid that if George W. Bush is a "man of honor," he will ask to be indicted rather than allow his underlings to take the fall. (I swear I am not making this up.)

Much can be said about the assumptions that underlie these words. First, we note that the dean's fear of "political warfare" trumps the rule of law, to say nothing of the results of a democratic election. As for Broder's eagerness to embrace torture as the result of "internal"—that is, secret—"debate," well, he might be interested to learn that not even the Bush Justice Department has his back on this one. Five days before Obama took office, the department issued a memo disavowing its own arguments. Pointing to the atmosphere of panic in which they were written following 9/11, department spokesmen announced that those memos not already (secretly) withdrawn should be considered inoperative. (Frank Rich has argued, persuasively in my view, that it was the administration's obsession with an imaginary Saddam-Osama connection that drove its torture tactics.) As for Bush being a "man of honor" who cannot abide his underlings taking the fall for his bad judgment, I'm afraid words fail me here…

Sadly, Broder's decision to avert his eyes from the distasteful and potentially criminal actions of his government is not exceptional; it's how he defines his job. Forty years ago he scolded those in the Democratic Party who challenged Lyndon Johnson's lies about Vietnam as "degrading…to those involved." Twenty years ago he attacked independent counsel Lawrence Walsh's investigation into criminal wrongdoing in the Iran/Contra scandal. (Reagan had mused that he would likely be impeached should his extraconstitutional actions ever be discovered.) Broder supported Republican efforts to impeach Bill Clinton, whose behavior he deemed "worse" than Richard Nixon's police-state tactics during Watergate because Nixon's actions, "however neurotic and criminal, were motivated and connected to the exercise of presidential power." There is a pattern here, obviously. When a president abuses his constitutional warmaking powers, he can depend on Broder not only to defend his crimes but to attack those who would hold him accountable. This, in the eyes of perhaps the most honored and admired journalist today, is the proper function of the press in a democracy.

Back in 1988, at a black-tie dinner in his honor given by the National Press Club at which he was feted by James Baker, among others, a famous journalist—sounding a bit like Dewey—worried that if Americans were to come to view the press as just another "power-wielding clique of insiders" they were going to end up "resentful as hell that they have no way to call us to account." It was a good thought. Unfortunately, the honoree—one David Broder—should have added, "But do as I say, not as I do." Thank goodness scrupulous journalists like Jane Mayer of *The New Yorker*, Mark Mazzetti and Scott Shane of the *New York Times*, Mark Danner of *The New York Review of Books* and Marcy Wheeler, a blogger for Firedoglake.com, among others, chose to take Broder's advice on this story as they ignored his example. Perhaps it's not too much to say they also helped rescue the honor of their profession in the process. ■

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The Future of the American Dream

Imagining an economy that puts people first.

by WILLIAM GREIDER

As Franklin Roosevelt understood, Americans will postpone immediate gratification and endure hard sacrifices—if they must—so long as they are convinced the future can be better than the past. But we face a far more difficult problem at our moment in history. What do you promise people who have been told they can have anything they want, who are repeatedly congratulated for living in the best of all possible circumstances? How do you tell them "the good times," as we have known them, are not coming back? Americans need a new vision that helps them deal with reality, a promising story of the future that helps them let go of the past.

Here is the grand vision I suggest Americans can pursue: the right of all citizens to larger lives. Not to get richer than the next guy or necessarily to accumulate more and more stuff but the right to live life more fully and engage more expansively the elemental possibilities of human existence. That is the essence of what so many now seem to yearn for in their lives. People—even successful and affluent people—are frustrated because the intangible dimensions of life have been held back or displaced in large and small ways, pushed aside by the economic system's relentless demands to maximize yields of profit and wealth. Our common moral verities have been trashed in the name of greater returns. The softer aspects of mortal experience are diminished because life itself is not tabulated in the economic system's accounting.

The political order mistakenly accepts these life-limiting trade-offs as normal, as necessary to achieve "good times." At earlier periods of our history, the sacrifices demanded by the engine of American capitalism were widely tolerated because the nation was young and underdeveloped. The engine promised to generate higher levels of abundance, and it did. But what is the justification now, when the nation is already quite rich and the engine keeps demanding larger chunks of our lives?

What families, even those who are prosperous, typically lose in the exchange are the small grace notes of everyday life, like the ritual of having a daily dinner with everyone present. The more substantial thing we sacrifice is time to experience the joys and mysteries of nurturing the children, the small pleasures of idle curiosity, of learning to craft things by one's own hand, and the satisfactions of friendships and social cooperation.

These are made to seem trivial alongside wealth accumulation, but many people know they have given up something more important and mourn the loss. Some decide they will make up for it later in life, after they are financially stable. Still others dream of dropping out of the system. If we could somehow add up all the private pain and loss caused by the pursuit of unbounded material prosperity, the result might look like a major political grievance of our time.

More important than all the other losses is that people are also denied another great intangible—the dignity of self-directed lives. At work, at home and in the public sphere, most people lack the right to exercise much of a voice in the decisions governing their daily lives. Most people (not all) are subject to a system of command and control over their destinies. They know the risks of ignoring the orders from above. Not surprisingly, many citizens are resigned to this condition and accept subservience as "the way things are," and their lives are smaller as a result. Many find it hard to imagine that these confinements could be lessened, even substantially removed, if economic organizations were informed by democratic principles.

What's needed in American life is a redefinition of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Given the nation's great wealth, the ancient threats of scarcity and deprivation have been eliminated. Yet people remain yoked to economic demands despite wanting something more from life—freedom to explore

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the mysteries and bring forth all that is within them. Collectively, Americans need to take a deep breath and reconsider what it means to be rich.

The challenge, as John Maynard Keynes wrote long ago, is how "to live wisely and agreeably and well" once desperation and deprivation are no longer the driving forces of our existence. As the British economist predicted, the old economic problems of scarcity and survival have been solved, at least for developed nations. People should put aside the old fears, Keynes suggested, and learn how to enjoy life. Free of want and worry, we face a new challenge: to discover what it means to be truly human.

That wondrous pursuit is what I recommend as the alternative to our old definition of progress. In the years ahead, Americans will suffer unavoidable losses of familiar pleasures and be compelled to alter some deeply ingrained habits of material consumption. These painful adjustments can be endured if the people are confident the country is progressing toward a more fulfilling transformation. The essential trade-off could be expressed on a bumper sticker: Smaller Cars for Larger Lives.

To accomplish this sweeping change, people need power—more power to say what they think without getting fired and to make choices that are more in line with their values and aspirations. They need more security—which would give them the self-confidence to explore new options without dooming their families to poverty. People need more philosophical space—the room to decide what "success" is in their own terms and to make their own "mistakes."

We should start thinking of living larger lives as a fundamental human right and begin throwing off the confinements imposed on us by the old order. Since scarcity has been vanquished, the collateral suffering manufactured by the economic system should also be declared unnecessary—even immoral—in a healthy and wealthy society. A minority of Americans, people blessed with special talents, wealth or status, may already enjoy this level of freedom. But as rich people can attest, wealth does not exempt one from the human struggle, the search to find one's groove in life, to draw forth one's unique purpose and strengths. That treasure cannot be bought. It has to be earned.

Government can do many things, but it cannot transform the society. Only the people can accomplish that. They change the fabric of society gradually and in unannounced ways with their behavior and creativity, guided roughly by their enduring moral values. If government set out to impose transformed values on the rest of us, the results would be oppressive and wrong. During the last generation, the coarsening pressures of the market system did a lot of damage to our society, but they did not succeed in stripping Americans of what they believe. Most people still know the difference between right and wrong, and despite the obstacles, they struggle to live accordingly.

What government can do is construct the rules, legal premises and supportive platform that enable people to pursue social transformation more aggressively. Our inventive popular culture—the marvel of the world—does this in freewheeling ways. With a little help and less interference from Washington, Americans can similarly reinvent the society. An era of innovation and random experimentation would draw upon this same spirit, the life force of Americans, the people who are practical and idealistic.

One important condition government can provide is the platform of "essential needs" that will give everyone more security and therefore more confidence to explore new and different choices. We could dust off Roosevelt's "second Bill of Rights" and address its unmet goals. FDR recognized in early 1944 that Americans were weary of the sacrifices imposed by World War II and so he announced a broadly conceived promise. After the war is won, he said, the country must construct a new set of meaningful "rights" for all, everything from health and education to work with remunerative wages. His vision of the future became the postwar political agenda of the Democrats, and in large measure the promises were kept. I think Barack Obama may eventually face a similar necessity to spell out the vision of what a transformed America can become on the other side of the ditch we are in. Some goals are already well understood. The thick backlog of legislative proposals that have been repeatedly blocked by powerful interests during the last generation should be revisited in order to establish concrete rights and protections for families and children, workers and employees. The extensive family-centered social systems in Europe suggest opportunities for US reforms. Reversing national economic policy on work and wages is, likewise, a necessary step toward healing the society. If government constructs a rising floor under wage incomes, starting from the bottom up, people at every level will be liberated to pursue creative social invention. In the face of deep recession and rising unemployment, there is not much anyone can do at present to boost wages. But government can make this promise for the future. When the economy recovers and unemployment declines, the minimum-wage floor will rise in step, and other work-improvement rules will kick in. Congress can enact the laws in advance and time their effective date to economic conditions.

Government can do many things, but it cannot transform the society. Only the people can accomplish that.

Beyond these essential steps, there are taller mountains to climb. We can envision loftier goals that require social imagination and then practical testing before gaining broad agreement and implementation. This is where we get to dream a little. Can we imagine, for instance, a country that is virtually without poor children? A nation in which every child grows up entitled to explore life's possibilities, free to go anywhere in this diverse country and feel at home? Can we imagine an economic system that is not organized on the principle of command and control, on the few giving orders to the many? Can

William Greider, The Nation's national affairs correspondent, is the author, most recently, of Come Home, America, *from which this article is excerpted.*
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we envision an economy designed to serve the society, rather than the other way around? Some will say this is an idle daydream. I say it is our birthright, our inherited privilege. We are Americans. We get to think larger thoughts about our country and ourselves. Daydreams are a seedbed for the possible. We can argue later about how to achieve them.

To encourage people to free up their imaginations, I add a radical proposition: instead of asking what will be good for the economy, government should start by asking what will be good for our people and society. Instead of thinking first about how to help businesses flourish, ask what people need in order to flourish in American life. Essentially, I am suggesting a reversal of the usual process employed by the system. In its efforts to take care of business, the social question is often never asked. Here are three big ideas—favorite daydreams of mine—to illustrate what it means to put the people first.

Breaking free of our rigid top-down system and liberating workers to enjoy the rights of being human would represent a profound change.

First, every American who is willing and able ought to have the right to a job that pays a livable wage. If the private sector will not provide these jobs, then the public sector should be the employer of last resort. Franklin Roosevelt described the goal—the practical equivalent of full employment—in his "second Bill of Rights," and the public has overwhelmingly endorsed the principle ever since. In recent decades, the economy has drifted even further from the promise, creating in its place a broad labor market of the underclass—temporary jobs paying unlivable wages and often filled by undocumented immigrants. Guaranteed public jobs paying more than the minimum wage would permanently and automatically stabilize the economy, swelling the ranks of public workers in recessions and shrinking them when private jobs become more abundant. Instead of punishing the working poor most severely in downturns, as the system does now, the government would redistribute the costs of recession so that all taxpayers would share the burden as a public obligation.

The social consequences of a change like this could be profound: it would be a direct assault on the poverty and hopelessness of inner-city precincts and decaying rural towns where the same pathologies ravage families and young people without regard to race or ethnicity. Real jobs would mean that reliable incomes would flow into those communities, providing a concrete basis for economic development and neighborhood restoration as well as the redemption of damaged lives, especially the prospects for young people.

Obviously, permanent public employment—jobs for all who need them—would be enormously expensive, but the fulfillment of large goals can begin with smaller steps. The government might set some guidelines, then sponsor 100 or 200 projects sited around the country and invite impoverished communities to compete for those in their area. What work needs to be done? What skills and equipment are required? People can answer those local questions for themselves. Some initial efforts will fail, but the country will learn from the mistakes and from the successes.

The second idea is that everyone who works, whether in the front office or on the assembly line, deserves to "own their work"—that is, the right to exercise personal responsibility for what they do and enjoy mutual respect and the capacity to contribute and collaborate in important decision-making within the firm. These elements of individual voice and status are critical to satisfaction in one's work, but democratic qualities are largely missing from American workplaces. When most people go to work, they submit to a master-servant relationship in which a few people determine everyone else's behavior and most employees are denied a voice in the matter and have no right to object or criticize. These confinements are especially strict for lower-wage workers but often extend far up the occupational ladder to include middle managers and professionals.

Breaking free of this rigid top-down system and liberating workers to enjoy the freedom (and responsibility) of being human would represent a profound change for our society, a great leap forward in our social development as a people. As it happens, the shift to more cooperative and respectful workplaces can also yield economic gain for the nation. As numerous academic studies have shown and outstanding companies already understand, collaborative relationships between top management and the workforce are more productive and profitable. Instead of being ruled by fierce conflicts, the different elements within these companies share information constantly and steadily improve by learning from their mistakes. The profits are shared because the workers are also the owners.

This reorganization of employment and ownership cannot be commanded from afar, because it requires everyone—workers and bosses—to change, to put aside old hostilities and begin trusting in more open communication. That change is very difficult for people to achieve in any setting. Government can encourage the pursuit, however, by setting out some incentives and loose guidelines for reforming work. One of the most promising routes to change is the employee stock ownership plan that invests everyone as co-owners with the same economic incentive—sharing the returns from self-improvement. Some 11,000 companies—mostly smaller businesses—are organized this way, and workers accumulate capital savings in addition to their pensions. Employee-owned companies, however, must also make internal reforms to establish mutual accountability and honest communication if they want to gain the full benefits of having worker-owners. The concept may seem alien to many, but its core assumptions are very American: a practical belief that equality and liberty can be present in our daily lives.

The third idea is that to lead the way for social values, the economy needs a new, reform-minded business organization—call it a social corporation—that competes with old-line corporations adhering to their narrower values that enforce the supremacy of profit over society. The social corporations could

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be chartered by government and given certain benefits. To pursue a different set of values, they may need some protections in their infancy and perhaps modest start-up subsidies, and exemptions from the usual rules, but most of them would be independent and privately owned. They would produce needed goods or services that the private sector won't provide and sell them at a price most people could afford. They might, for instance, fulfill the market for very cheap computers and other high-tech devices that are stripped of the bells and whistles that run up the prices. The social corporation would be a working model for how the social imperatives—environmental values and equitable relations with workers and communities—can be integrated into firms and efficient production processes. Business lore and economic dogma say this is impossible. Social corporations would set out to prove them wrong. The purpose of this competition is not to replace orthodox companies but to put real market pressures on them to change. Creating social enterprises, including nonprofit cooperatives, can liberate us from the political vetoes business interests exert over promising new ideas.

Another crucial objective is to limit the size of business organizations, including social corporations, in line with E.F. Schumacher's famous dictum "Small is beautiful." The bloated scale of America's leading corporations has become a major impediment to innovation and experimental reforms, not to mention a corrupting influence in politics. Americans are learning anew from the financial crisis why it is a mistake to let private firms concentrate more and more power under one management. The failure of megabanks that the government helped create threatens our general well-being, and then government bails them out with taxpayer money because they are "too big to fail." Revived antitrust laws could simply prohibit the concentration of economic power as a threat to social values as well as to healthy competition.

Economic power must be dispersed in this broad nation, especially in banking and finance. We need many more financial intermediaries to allocate capital and credit and demonstrate more respect for society's needs. That includes regional banks, which are naturally closer to the customers. It means supporting and protecting the small and adventurous financial firms founded on commitments to social responsibility. They put capital into companies that have embraced environmental concerns, have equitable dealings with workers and communities and practice high-road behavior. On many fronts one can see the gradual advance of "social responsibility" in US capitalism. The pace is too slow to attract much political respect, but the current crumbling of the old order will clear the way for more dramatic progress.

These ideas may seem distant from the usual chatter of policy thinkers, but they offer alternatives to an economic system that has abused rather than served American life. I know a lot of smart people across the country who are pursuing these ideas in different ways—they constitute the beginnings of formations of citizens that can disrupt inert politics and overcome the timidity of incumbent politicians. These agitators are engaging in action for the long run, and the fainthearted need not apply. ■

Change Socialists Can Believe In

by BARBARA EHRENREICH AND BILL FLETCHER JR.

In our March 23 issue, we published "Reimagining Socialism," a forum inspired by Barbara Ehrenreich and Bill Fletcher Jr.'s provocative essay "Rising to the Occasion: Do Socialists Have a Plan?" At TheNation.com, we posted additional contributions to the forum from leading voices of the left, including Mike Davis, Saskia Sassen, Vijay Prashad, Doug Henwood, George Papandreou and many more. Below, Ehrenreich and Fletcher answer the replies. Please visit the website to view the exchange in its entirety. —*The Editors*

KAREN CALDICOTT

We are honored by the many fascinating and challenging responses to our essay, and we are happy to have a chance to clarify and expand on it. If there was one misunderstanding—for which we, of course, take responsibility—it is that we announced the collapse of capitalism, with all the opportunities and dangers that may present. On the contrary, we expressed great appreciation for the resilience of capitalism in the face of the crises it perpetually generates. At the moment of this writing, the finance industry may be sufficiently refreshed by infusions of taxpayer blood in the form of bailouts to rise up and return to its old ways. In which case the immediate crisis will pass, and we on the left can resume our usual tasks of critiquing "the system" and seeking modest, cumulative reforms within it.

This might, in fact, be the best we can hope for. Without a strong left, the alternatives to capitalism are more likely to be nasty than liberating. Fascism was one response to the crisis of the 1930s, and we may be seeing adumbrations of that in the far-right outcry against Obama's "socialism." Or we may be heading for a collapse, not of private capitalism but of the state—drained by war and the ongoing appallingly large transfusions of public money into the private profit-making sector.

Barbara Ehrenreich is the author, most recently, of This Land Is Their Land: Reports From a Divided Nation. *Bill Fletcher Jr. is the executive editor of* The Black Commentator.

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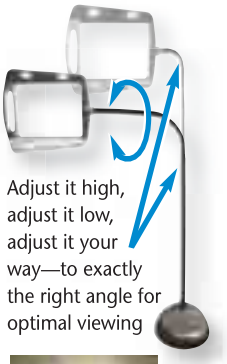

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There is no historically inevitable outcome here, and there is always the possibility of apocalyptic collapse leading to barbarism, warlordism or worse.

We do seem to differ from some of our respondents in our appreciation for capitalism's capacity for self-destruction. Not only are key industries like finance and auto faltering, not only is unemployment rising at a rate unprecedented since the '80s but the credibility of capitalism as a system is in serious disrepair. A nationwide poll released on April 9 shows that an astonishingly low 53 percent of Americans prefer capitalism to socialism, with 20 percent favoring socialism and 27 percent undecided. We are not entirely sure what this means, because the poll question offered no definition of capitalism or socialism, and it may be simply that the right has gone too far in equating a hyperpopular president's centrist policies with "socialism." If "capitalism" is represented by right-wing populist blowhards like Limbaugh and Beck, while "socialism" bears the far more appealing face of Barack Obama, the choice is not too difficult.

We do know, however, that despite our best efforts, we on the left cannot take credit for this stunning shift away from cold war attitudes—any more than we can claim to have organized low- and middle-income homeowners to bring down the system by defaulting on their mortgages, beginning in 2007. That system had become increasingly based on fantasy and blind optimism—substituting easy credit for decent wages, and delirious overleveraging for actual corporate assets—to the point where phrases like "Ponzi scheme" and "house of cards" applied not just to some of the more reckless enterprises but to an entire way of doing business. This was not a sustainable situation, even in the narrowest economic terms, as many of the formerly wealthy now understand.

Could trillions of dollars in bailouts revive that system, so that those of us who have not yet lost our homes and livelihoods can go rushing back to the malls and the car dealerships? Possibly, but then we run headlong into the brick wall of ecological limits. This is not 1848, when the first working-class socialist movements were flexing their muscles, when America still had a frontier and the planet seemed to offer an inexhaustible wealth of resources. We know now that perpetual growth—the hallmark of a successful capitalist economy—is no more possible than perpetual motion. We cannot continue the project of transforming nonrenewable resources into carbon dioxide, algae, air pollution, space junk and urban mountains of trash. At least, not if we want our progeny to survive.

So there's nothing alarmist—or opportunistic—about our declaration of a crisis that demands more of us than the kind of slow, reformist work that has characterized most of our efforts so far. For the millions of unemployed, the system has already collapsed, and in a broader ecological sense, a whole way of life is coming to an end. With almost half of Americans unsure about the viability of capitalism and many leaning toward socialism, we who have called ourselves socialists—or to be ecumenical about it, anarchists, eco-feminists, radical syndicalists, etc.—have a responsibility to initiate at least the discussion of fundamental change.

With nearly half of Americans unsure about capitalism, socialists have a responsibility to initiate at least the discussion of fundamental change.

We—Ehrenreich and Fletcher—are not entirely unanimous about the nature and outcome of this discussion, having been shaped, in varying degrees, by such different ideologies as radical feminism and black nationalism, as well as by our decades of participation in antiwar and labor struggles. We may occupy different points on the spectrum between classical Marxism and an inclination to "make the road by walking"—between traditional, class-based socialism and feminist-inflected utopian alternatives. But we are both socialists, which means, fundamentally, that we believe in the human capacity to solve our common problems collectively in an egalitarian, participatory and democratic fashion. As we wrote in our original essay, we share the conviction that the time has come for so-called ordinary people to step into history and take control of their own destiny.

This is not a trivial, feel-good point of agreement. For one thing, it rules out continued reliance on "the market" to dictate the availability of basic goods like healthcare, food and shelter. Furthermore, it rejects hierarchy as a basis for social organization, whether the traditional hierarchies of gender and race or the faux-meritocratic hierarchies of class and formal education. Perhaps most important, it demands a collective response to crisis, as opposed, for example, to a frantic scramble for individual survival. While average Americans stockpile guns and the superrich, for all we know, are buying up waterfront property in Antarctica and reserving suites in new luxury space stations, we, as socialists, insist that we are all in this together and will survive only through our collective efforts.

Where could a vast conversation about alternative economies and ways of living take place? In left publications like this one, obviously, and we are profoundly grateful to *The Nation* for hosting this forum. Another site would be multi-issue left organizations, and we hope that the uptick of interest in socialism encourages the formation of some that are broader and less esoteric (or sectarian) than the existing ones. Right now, the American left—the only one we have firsthand knowledge of—is fragmented into hundreds of concentrations on particular issues and identities, as well as countless local struggles, and it seems unlikely to congeal anytime soon into a single-minded, coordinated movement. But even in its messiness and diversity, the left can do better at creating spaces in which to begin democratic deliberation of fundamental issues. For example, we are intensely interested in efforts to organize the unemployed. But these need to go beyond the usual mutual support and advocacy efforts—such as helping with job searches and pressing for more generous unemployment benefits—to encouraging people to imagine very different ways of doing things. We would like to see laid-off manufacturing workers discussing what to

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Father Joseph Koterski is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy from St. Louis University and his M. Div. from the Weston School of Theology.

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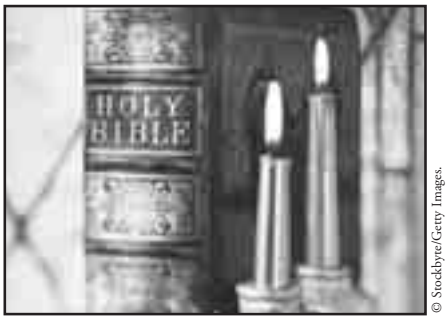

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do with the empty factories and putting forward concrete plans in their communities. And instead of abandoning workers who get laid off, labor unions should encourage their continued membership and begin to function, among other things, as think tanks for the rebuilding of America.

Rising unemployment opens up a number of basic questions. Why should the means of survival—income and, in this country, health insurance—be conditional on one's state of employment? And what about all the human skills that employers seem to have so little use for at the moment? We should be encouraging laid-off engineers, social workers, teachers, software writers, mechanics, welders and others to begin the work of imagining a society that could actually make use of their precious skills and experience. Similarly, we would like to see groups that work with the homeless—including all those who are reluctantly squeezed in with relatives or acquaintances, as well as those living in their vehicles or on the streets—create forums for discussions of universal housing and how it might be designed to strengthen communities. How do we want to live, and what does each have to contribute to get there? No question is too large to tackle, no person too insignificant to participate in framing the answers.

Some of our respondents took us to task for our parochialism as American thinkers and activists, and we humbly acknowledge this limitation. Obviously, the economic/ecological crisis is global, and solutions will require international cooperation at a grassroots level—which is to say that the vast conversation we are calling for can only be enriched by extending it across national boundaries. Already we are seeing a certain amount of cross-fertilization, as when a general strike in Guadeloupe sparked workers' protests in France, or when the example of South American workers' movements helped inspire a worker takeover of the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago. We need many more forums for international discussion, and not just for those who can afford long-distance travel. Let the conversation begin, informed and accompanied by concerted action for change. ■

The Palestinian Paradox

The surest path to statehood and lasting peace is engagement with Hamas.

by HELENA COBBAN

When I interviewed Salam Fayyad in Ramallah at the end of February, he was a worried man—and with reason. In June 2007 Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Fatah movement and the elected president of the Palestinian Authority, had installed Fayyad as the PA's "emergency" prime minister. That was right after the clashes in which US-trained Fatah forces were thrown out of the Gaza Strip by security forces loyal to elected Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya.

Abbas hoped that the marriage of Fayyad's widely publicized managerial skills with large amounts of US and US-encouraged funding—$1.8 billion delivered in 2007, for the West Bank's population of just 2.5 million—would enable the Fatah-controlled West Bank to flourish. Palestinian voters in Gaza, squeezed tight by the illegal blockade Israel had imposed following the 2006 election there, would then renounce the preference for Hamas they had displayed in the elections and restore Fatah to power.

But it did not work out. Opinion polls conducted in late January—shortly after the end of Israel's devastating twenty-two-day assault on Gaza—found Hamas more popular than Fatah. Indeed, Hamas was more popular in the West Bank than it was in war-shattered Gaza. No wonder Fayyad was gloomy. He greeted me by saying, in the economist-speak that is his preferred jargon, "Things are, as always, getting incrementally worse. But now the increments are getting bigger." Two weeks later he tendered his resignation.

HATEM MOUSSA/AP

Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya and his supporters in Gaza, May 1

In the interview, Fayyad focused on the Israeli authorities' failure to let him do his job, in two key respects. First, Israel's continued building of settlements in the West Bank was limiting the possibility that a viable Palestinian state could be salvaged from the land that remained. And second, frequent Israeli military incursions were hampering the PA's ability to govern in areas that are supposed to be under Palestinian control. "We have proved

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we have restored law and order throughout the West Bank, so they have no pretext to send their own forces in," Fayyad told me. "Every time they do that, it undermines us very seriously."

Fayyad is far from alone in thinking the clock might be running out for the two-state solution. The prospect of building an independent Palestinian state in all or nearly all of the territories occupied by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in June 1967—the goal that most Palestinian secular nationalists have adhered to since 1974—looks very remote absent a major change of behavior by Israel. As this prospect has dimmed, many Palestinians and a small group of stalwarts in the ruins of Israel's peace movement have returned to an older idea that was once more popular in both cultures: that of a single, binational state stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

As secular Palestinians' hopes for a two-state solution have receded, a surprising degree of support for it has come from an unlikely source: Hamas. Given that Hamas has always formally adhered to the goal of a single Islamic state in the whole of historical (Mandate-era) Palestine, this seems paradoxical. Further, if there's truth to the widely held argument that Palestinian statehood is necessary to Israel's long-term continuation as a Jewish state, then it is only Hamas's continued adherence to the PA project that is keeping alive the prospect of Israel's survival as a Jewish state.

As secular Palestinians' hopes for a two-state solution have receded, a surprising degree of support for it has come from Hamas.

In 1994, when Yasir Arafat returned to the occupied territories to establish the Palestinian Authority, few Palestinians imagined that the PA would still be around fifteen years later. The PA was only meant to be a temporary fix, pending the implementation of a final peace between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The 1993 Oslo Accord, the historic agreement from which the PA sprang, was opposed not only by Islamists but also by many leading secular nationalists. They argued that by recognizing Israel up front, Arafat had ceded the Palestinians' claims to 78 percent of their ancestral homeland in return for the uncertain possibility that Israel would allow the PLO to establish a severely curtailed "state" in some portion of the remaining 22 percent. But even those who supported Oslo never dreamed that the PA would last so long. According to the agreement, final-status negotiations were to be finished by 1999. Ten years past the deadline, that still hasn't happened; meanwhile, the "temporary" PA has acquired a constitution, the "basic law" that mandates holding regular elections for the president and the legislature.

When the PA held its first parliamentary and presidential elections in 1996, Hamas—opposed to Oslo and all that flowed from it—boycotted them. In 1996 many Hamas activists were deeply engaged in vicious tit-for-tat violence with Israel, including the dispatch of suicide bombers to places packed with civilians deep inside Israel proper. That was in line with the militant principles on which the group had been founded in 1987, in the tumultuous early days of the first intifada. The founders were members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had already built strong educational and social-service networks in the occupied territories and used them as a springboard to intervene in nationalist politics. Hamas means "zeal"; it is also an acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya, the Islamic Resistance Movement. The concept of "resistance" is at the heart of the group's self-definition, but Hamas has always practiced many different forms of resistance, including *sumoud* (grassroots-based civil resistance) and armed struggle.

By 2005, though, Hamas had reconsidered its boycott of PA elections. Arafat died in late 2004; Abbas, his political heir, handily won the presidential election in January 2005. Throughout that year, Abbas spearheaded negotiations with Hamas, Israel and the United States to lay the ground rules under which Hamas could participate in the parliamentary race scheduled for January 2006. At the same time, Abbas and Hamas were cooperating in policing the "unilateral" cease-fire that allowed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to evacuate all the Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza without harassment.

Sharon and the Bush administration signed off on the rules for Hamas's inclusion in the elections. Very few people (except a handful of Hamas leaders) expected the party to win. But a combination of Hamas's impressive grassroots organizing and the chaos and disunity that had wracked Fatah for twenty years gave Hamas a stunning seventy-four of the chamber's 132 seats. Israel and the Bush administration responded with the siege of Gaza and began working to quarantine and, if possible, overthrow the Hamas government. That was the main rationale for the security assistance that US Gen. Keith Dayton gave to the Ramallah-based Palestinian security forces.

In June 2007, however, as Fatah strongman Muhammad Dahlan was preparing his US-trained forces to move against Hamas in Gaza, Hamas pre-empted him. Dahlan's forces scattered in disarray, and the brief experiment in "national unity" fell apart. Ismail Haniya set up a Hamas-dominated government in Gaza, and Abbas appointed Fayyad to form his separate, US-backed administration in Ramallah.

So much has happened in the Palestinian territories since 2006 that few Westerners have paid heed to the momentous nature of Hamas's decision to participate in the elections that year. For the first time, Hamas was buying in to an important part of the PA project. In late 2005, as Hamas precinct captains were building up and tallying their voter lists, their Damascus-based leader, Khaled Meshal, was talking more frankly than ever before about Hamas's willingness to consider entering into a decades-long *hudna* (truce) with Israel, if Israel agreed to withdraw its troops and settlers totally from the lands occupied in 1967. With a few further tweaks, the Hamas concept of a lengthy *hudna* looked intriguingly like an emerging position of support for a two-state-based final peace.

That position could strengthen prospects for unification

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between Hamas and Fatah. In February of this year, shortly before the opening of key reconciliation talks the Palestinian parties held in Cairo, I interviewed Hamas parliamentarian Ayman Daraghmeh in Ramallah. Daraghmeh, a somber and well-organized physician in his early 40s, said the two key issues on which reconciliation depended were reform of the PLO and reform of the PA's security forces. "Forming the new PA government will not be so hard, compared with those," he said. These talks—like the parallel, Egyptian-mediated negotiations between Hamas and Israel over solidifying the January cease-fire and lifting the siege of Gaza—have continued fitfully and remain inconclusive.

On March 2, in Hebron, I interviewed Daraghmeh's colleagues Nizar Ramadan and Azzam Salhab, both of whom had recently been released from prison terms in Israel that started before the 2006 election. (They ran for office from their cells and were part of the Hamas team that made a clean sweep in Hebron's nine-seat constituency.) The two men said they were hopeful about the chances of success in the reconciliation talks. "It will be good to bring the two wings of occupied Palestine together," Ramadan said, spreading his hands to represent two wings—the geographically separated West Bank and Gaza.

Even though Hamas commands considerable support in the West Bank—fifty-two of the seventy-four Hamas parliamentarians elected in 2006 are based there—its ability to exercise its power has been severely hampered not only by Israel, which holds thousands of Hamas members in detention at any given time and forty-four parliamentarians, but also by the PA. Ramadan told me that the Ramallah-based PA security forces were holding "around 700" Hamas prisoners—seventy of whom had been arrested since the opening of the reconciliation talks in Cairo. In a predawn raid on March 19, IDF snatch squads punched deep into various portions of the West Bank and arrested or rearrested ten leading Hamas politicos. Daraghmeh, Ramadan and Salhab were among those picked up that night, and they have been incarcerated ever since. (Washington remained shamefully silent on this assault against democracy.)

Despite large amounts of international funding and military aid to Fatah, Hamas is stronger and more popular among Palestinians.

What struck me about the Hamas parliamentarians was the discipline with which they stuck to a unified message, the seriousness of their demeanor, their thoughtfulness and intelligence—and the fact that, despite the immense grief and suffering they and their supporters have endured since 2006, they all talked as though Hamas's participation in PA institutions was valuable and likely to continue for some time. The only hint that this might change came when Ramadan said, "Hamas is wise because it doesn't want to get trapped into allowing Israel to drag out the negotiations for another fifteen years, like the fifteen years they've already won from this present PA leadership."

The Gaza war marked the culmination of a long-term campaign that all Israeli governments have waged since 1996: to constrain the power of the PA as much as possible. The Israeli grip on the occupied territories has prevented the PA from building anything faintly resembling a functioning "national" economy. Poverty levels have soared. Gaza has been transformed into a disaster zone. In the West Bank, Israel maintains and tightly controls a gruesome archipelago of small, nominally Palestinian-controlled land-blobs—cut off from one another by Israeli settlements, Israeli-only roads and more than 600 IDF-controlled checkpoints, gates, earth mounds, fences and ditches. A large proportion of the population of the West Bank has been forced onto a dependency-inducing form of international dole. Harvard's Sarah Roy speaks of "the engineering of the Palestinians into a nation of perpetual beggars—in the West Bank, as well as Gaza."

Some Hamas leaders—including, crucially, the Gaza-based foreign minister, Mahmoud Zahhar—have argued that if the Gazan economy could be freed from Israeli control, then a Palestinian administration based there could become the embryo of a much larger Palestinian state. Zahhar, Haniya and their Hamas colleagues in Gaza invested a lot in that project, but Israel joined forces with Egypt to prevent it from happening. And then, as we know, Israel received carte blanche from the Bush administration to launch the military assault on Gaza—ostensibly to halt a barrage of rocket attacks into Israel but in effect to destroy the Hamas government, or at least to bring it to its knees.

Despite all the destruction the IDF wrought in Gaza, Hamas was not broken, and it did not cry uncle. Though the IDF assassinated two second-level Hamas leaders, killed an additional 300 to 400 fighters and destroyed most of the mosque-based offices used by the group's social-service networks, Hamas did not buckle or back down from its core demand that any cease-fire must include the lifting of the Israeli siege. The "big war" ended in an uneasy standoff on January 18, when both sides instituted unilateral cease-fires. But far from lifting the siege, the Israeli government tightened it further; it has even refused to allow the basic building materials for reconstruction to be shipped in. The United States, Europe and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have colluded in maintaining this policy of collective punishment. The Haniya-Zahhar team has thus far been unable to change those stark facts, and the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire.

Haniya and Zahhar do not, however, form the national leadership of Hamas, as the PA president does of Fatah. Hamas's highest decision-making body, the political bureau, is located outside the occupied territories. Hamas therefore has a resilience and strategic depth that Fatah lacks. Hamas's internal organization is also considerably stronger, more disciplined and robust than that of Fatah—as evidenced during the 2006 election and many times since.

Another paradox of recent Palestinian political life is that the large amount of international (mainly European) funding

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the Bush administration mobilized to strengthen Fatah's hand against Hamas has instead left Fatah much weaker relative to Hamas than it would have been. Money that could have been spent underwriting the emergence of a sturdy proto-national economy has instead been poured into the salaries and pensions of Ramallah's often idle civil servants and the members of its bloated security forces. This has further fueled the corruption and clientelism of Fatah and its allies, hastening their internal decay.

And what have Ramallah's well-funded security forces been doing in recent years? The always well-informed Mustafa Barghouti gave me the answer. Barghouti is a physician and well-regarded former grassroots organizer who founded the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Societies. Today he heads the small, largely social-democratic Palestinian National Initiative Party. He was one of two party members elected to Parliament in 2006 and was minister of information in the short-lived unity government of 2007. During a late-February interview in Ramallah, Barghouti gave several recent examples of incursions that the IDF had made into supposedly PA-controlled areas in Ramallah and elsewhere. "Palestinian security forces are under standing orders to hide whenever the Israelis come into the areas where they are patrolling," he added. "But if they get caught by surprise because the Israelis have not given them advance notice, then the Palestinian forces have orders to put their guns on the ground and turn their backs on whatever it is the Israelis are doing." He said he thought Abbas and Fayyad could change those standing orders. But so far, they have chosen not to do so.

Given the weakness of both Gaza and Ramallah, the center of gravity of the Palestinians' national leadership has started to move out of the occupied territories: flowing to key centers among the more than 5 million Palestinians living in exile and to the 1.2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel. This shift has big implications, since these are the two Palestinian constituencies whose needs were most notably ignored when Arafat signed the Oslo Accord. Oslo and the negotiations that flowed from it gave very short shrift to the longstanding Palestinian demand that refugees be allowed to return to the homes and properties their forebears fled in the territory that became Israel in 1948. In addition, Oslo and the entire concept of the two-state solution are based on an ethno-nationalist view of statehood that felt threatening to many Palestinian Israelis. In both groups, there is understandable enthusiasm for a unitary, binational state.

People in Israel's newly ascendant right have also been touting some alternatives to a two-state outcome. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has revived his former, never feasible idea of a purely "economic" peace with the Palestinians. He and other Israeli rightists also speak of trying to offload the problems of Gaza and the West Bank onto Egypt and Jordan, under what they dub the "regional" approach.

Since the beginning of his term, President Obama has called for speedy progress toward a two-state solution. But thus far, his administration has done nothing to challenge any of the actions by which Israeli policies make this outcome increasingly impossible. The people of Israel and Palestine are thus perilously poised between very different versions of the future. In the luxurious cafes and shopping malls of Tel Aviv, it is easy to imagine that the present situation can be effortlessly sustained. But for the deeply hurting Palestinians, maintaining the status quo is not an option. Unless Obama moves rapidly to throw power behind his so-far empty rhetoric, Palestinians could soon face another destabilizing crisis.

The potential for implosion is high. Already, a rising chorus of voices among the secular nationalists, looking at the debilitating train wreck that the PA has become, is starting to ask whether it might be better to abandon the PA altogether, hand the costs and responsibilities of running Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza back for Israel to bear directly, and restart negotiations (or resistance) from scratch. Fatah can no longer bear the weight of the PA project on its own. If Hamas withdraws its support from it, the fragile structure of Palestinian politics will collapse—and will likely bring regional stability down with it.

So far, the Obama administration has done nothing to challenge any of the Israeli policies that make prospects for peace so dim.

There are other scenarios for renewed conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, too. Today, Hamas is much stronger among Palestinians, and more popular among Muslims worldwide, than it was nine years ago, when Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to Jerusalem's sacred Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area sparked the outbreak of the second intifada. If another incident of that sort provokes a new round of fighting, it will be Hamas, much more than Fatah and Mahmoud Abbas, that will determine the Palestinians' future.

The conditions for another explosion of violence in Jerusalem are frighteningly ripe. Successive Israeli governments since 1967 have built vast, thick rings of settlements around the occupied eastern portion of the city. Those settlements cut its 270,000 Palestinian residents off from their compatriots and close relatives in the rest of the West Bank; and now the twenty-five-foot concrete wall reinforces that excision. In recent years, too, settler activists have accelerated their push to establish residential "outposts" deep within the remaining Palestinian residential areas. To do this they have acquired titles—sometimes real, sometimes forged—to numerous Palestinian properties and summarily evicted their owners. The pro-settler municipality has also used zoning regulations to designate thousands of Palestinian-owned buildings "illegal"; and the fear of summary demolition is deepened by municipal bulldozers that have taken down 109 Palestinian homes since 2008, according to UN estimates. (In Silwan, a strongly Palestinian portion of the city, the municipality recently announced that eighty-eight homes would be demolished to make way for a Jewish-

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themed history park. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that such actions are "unhelpful.")

Palestinians in Jerusalem are particularly vulnerable. Most are not Israeli citizens; they hold Israeli-issued IDs that allow them to live in the city of their birth, but they live with the constant fear that Israel will withdraw these IDs at any moment. Israeli laws prohibit them from holding public political gatherings. The four men elected from Jerusalem to the Palestinian Parliament in 2006 are all in Israeli prisons.

Quietly, and with help from many Palestinian citizens of Israel (who can travel to Jerusalem quite freely, unlike the Palestinians of Ramallah or Hebron), Jerusalem's Palestinians do what they can to resist. On a windy day in early March I talked to Um Kamel al-Kurd, a woman in her early 60s who has been living in a tent on a bare lot since November, when she and her husband were thrown out of their longtime home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. The eviction came at 3:30 AM and was carried out by a massive detachment of armed police. Kurd's husband died shortly thereafter.

"Why do they do this to us?" she asked as we warmed our hands over a brazier. "All we want to do is have the three religions of people here live together in peace, but the settlers come from the four corners of the world and throw us out of our own homes!" Israeli police have demolished Kurd's tent six times, but each time she has returned. And every day a stream of supporters make their way to stand at her side. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

spouses in an imperfect but more gender-equal world may not excite the passions of shellshocked ideologues who are wont to relive the glorious battles of first-generation feminists with Norman Mailer. Guess what? Mailer is dead. It is a startling fact of contemporary post–gender war America that even people with degrees from Princeton and Harvard Law—male and female alike—might prefer to find a workable balance in their lives rather than subscribe to dated prescriptions about gender equality that bear a suspicious resemblance to the one-dimensional he-man ethos they were supposed to combat.

Michelle Obama is an example of a successful, educated woman with degrees from Princeton and Harvard who has achieved an obvious degree of personal happiness by pursuing multiple roles as a mother, lawyer and wife, rather than choosing to sacrifice her life with her kids and her husband to the goal of making partner at a big-name law firm. So what? Are the facts of Michelle Obama's life really so threatening that Pollitt has to turn them into a plot against women, led by me and Christopher Hitchens? Other women in Michelle Obama's position make different choices, just as men do. Let a thousand flowers bloom.

As for Michelle Obama's vaunted salary of $273,618, to which Pollitt refers: it seems worth pointing out that the job in question was as a lobbyist for the University of Chicago Hospitals after her husband was elected to the Senate in 2004—a nice little kicker, to be sure. But that's not the salary that Michelle Obama earned while she was raising her kids and working the modest, practical professional jobs to which I referred in my modest squib for *New York* magazine. Her salary during those years ranged between $50,343 and $121,910. While that seems like a lot of money to me, it hardly puts her in the top 75 percent of her graduating class at Princeton—let alone Harvard Law School.

David Samuels

Pollitt Replies

New York City

Surely David Samuels isn't really arguing that I'm old and miserable? Predate blue jeans, rock music and orgasms? Obsess about, of all people, Norman Mailer? No, this is bluster, intended to distract attention from what he actually wrote in *New York*: "There are clear limits to Michelle's ambition. She went to excellent schools, got decent grades, stayed away from too much intellectual heavy lifting, and held a series of practical, modestly salaried jobs while accommodating her husband's wilder dreams and raising two lovely daughters. In this, she is a more practical role model for young women than Hillary Clinton, blending her calculations about family and career with an expectation of normal personal happiness."

As readers can see, Samuels did not use the life of Michelle Obama to promote work/family balance for "male and female alike," an idea I have taken quill in bony hand many times to promote. He specifically advised "young women" that modest ambition and the enabling of a "husband's wilder dreams" was the path to happiness. There is no suggestion here that young men might also consider such a life, or that both partners in a marriage might figure out a way to accommodate each other's desire for family time *and* achievement. I guess that would be one of those dreaded "dated prescriptions about gender equality."

As for Hillary Clinton, whom Samuels sets up as the negative example, how different were her choices from Michelle Obama's? She worked at a career she cared about, she raised a child, she accommodated her husband's wilder dreams. It's curious that she has become a symbol for relentless female ambition, because her life could equally be read as an inspiring attempt at work/family balance—or as a warning against putting your wilder dreams on hold for someone else's.

Regarding Michelle Obama's salary, Samuels cherry-picks the years when she made less; I prefer the years when she made more. As a *Nation* writer, I naturally tend to resist the notion that salary is a reliable guide to the value of someone's work or the effort they put into it. The larger point, though, is that Samuels seems curiously keen to diminish her accomplishments, right down to her college grades. In his description she comes across as nice but not very interesting or smart or committed to anything larger than her family. Usually when someone describes another as avoiding "too much intellectual heavy lifting," it's not a compliment. The lawyers and health policy experts I've met who have worked with Michelle Obama have a much higher opinion of her, and so do I.

Katha Pollitt

Bolivitana? Montanivia?

In Chesa Boudin's May 11 "Mining Bolivia's Past," the country's population and its physical size were conflated in a comparison of Bolivia and Montana. For the record, Bolivia's population is 10 million (about ten times Montana's); its area is almost three times that of Montana.

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Books & the Arts.

ROWLAND SCHERMAN

I.F. Stone in the print shop of *I.F. Stone's Weekly* in Washington, DC, circa 1968

Red Harvest

by D.D. GUTTENPLAN

The last time I saw Alexander Vassiliev he was slumped in a seat at the Royal Courts of Justice in London. A small, fair-haired man wearing a dark suit and a black shirt, Vassiliev was an ex-KGB officer who had helped Allen Weinstein, an American historian whose *Perjury* (1978) convinced most Americans that Alger Hiss had indeed been a Soviet spy, to write another book. The fruit of their collaboration, *The Haunted Wood* (1999), was hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "a small arsenal of smoking guns." In *The New York Review of Books*, Thomas Powers declared that "anyone who wants to know what Hiss and his friends were up to can find a rich, convincing, and vivid report in *The Haunted Wood*." Hiss, who'd died in 1996 still protesting his innocence, was already beyond redemption. For Weinstein, the acclaim merely accelerated his rise from the comparative obscurity of the Smith College history department, via the National Endowment for Democracy, to his appointment by President George W. Bush in April 2004 as archivist of the United States. The project seemed to have brought Vassiliev only grief.

Not only did Weinstein, who couldn't even read Russian, claim top billing; he used Vassiliev's findings on Hiss in a 1997 reissue of *Perjury* without permission. Vassiliev was so angry that he wanted to sue, and turned for advice to *The Nation*'s Victor Navasky, well known both as a defender of Alger Hiss and as a critic of Weinstein's scholarship and ethics. Navasky replied that he was "reluctant to collaborate in any legal actions vis-à-vis Weinstein" but was curious about Vassiliev's grievance. "In my universe," Vassiliev replied in an e-mail, "the thing he did to me is called theft, and thieves get punished. I spent 2 years in the KGB archives, doing the research for *The Haunted Wood*. I gave up my career as a TV presenter and newspaper columnist for it. I smuggled from Russia hundreds of top secret non-declassified KGB documents, and therefore I can't return there now." But soon enough, still living in exile in London, beached by the tides of history, Vassiliev would find a new outlet for his anger.

In the fall of 2000 John Lowenthal, a retired Rutgers law professor who had worked as a volunteer on the Hiss defense team, published a lengthy analysis of the latest evidence regarding Hiss in *Intelligence and National Security*, an obscure British quarterly. After Lowenthal posted on Amazon the portion of his review dealing with *The Haunted Wood*, Vassiliev decided to sue—not Lowenthal but the quarterly's British publisher, Frank Cass, and Amazon. British courts are notoriously friendly to libel plaintiffs; for one thing, the burden of proof is on the defendant. (In the United States, Vassiliev would have had to prove that Lowenthal's criticisms were untrue.) Vassiliev was so confident of an easy victory over Cass—followed

Spies
The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America.
By John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr and Alexander Vassiliev.
Yale. 650 pp. $35.

Alger Hiss and the Battle for History
By Susan Jacoby.
Yale. 256 pp. $24.

D.D. Guttenplan, who writes from The Nation*'s London bureau, is the author of* American Radical: The Life and Times of I.F. Stone *(Farrar, Straus and Giroux). He wishes to thank Stewart Cass and Victor Navasky, who read a draft of this essay; Dr. Svetlana Chervonnaya, who pointed to documents not cited in* Spies*; and Alexander Guttenplan, who patiently translated materials from the Russian.*

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by a lucrative settlement from Amazon—that he rejected repeated offers of four-figure sums (but no apology) from Cass's lawyers. The trial began on June 9, 2003.

When Lowenthal called me and asked if I'd be interested in reporting on the dispute, I resisted. I'd always thought there was something vaguely comical about our elders' obsession with Alger Hiss. And after many years of working on a biography of I.F. Stone, I'd learned a great deal about the ambiguous history of American Communism. My stubbornly uninformed view was that Hiss was probably at the very least a secret Communist—I'd come across enough of those myself, including Nathaniel Weyl, who claimed to have been in the same group as Hiss in the 1930s. So why was I there in court, studying Vassiliev's posture while sitting next to Victor Navasky, who'd flown to London to testify for the defense? Because there was something deeply compelling about John Lowenthal, who informed me during a series of telephone calls that he had stopped his chemotherapy for terminal throat cancer so he could concentrate on the case. I felt I owed it to John at least to witness his day in court.

After four days of arguments, testimony and cross-examination, the jury first had to decide whether Lowenthal's claim that Weinstein and Vassiliev "omit relevant facts" and "selectively replaced covernames with their own notion of the real names" was indeed defamatory. Likewise, Lowenthal's suggestion that Vassiliev, "if he's honest," would—quoting Boris Labusov, a press officer of the SVR, the successor to the KGB—have to concede that "he never met the name of Alger Hiss in the context of some cooperation with some special services of the Soviet Union." Since John freely admitted he'd intended to defame the authors of *The Haunted Wood*, that part was easy.

The next hurdle was the defense of fair comment. Though he didn't need to prove that everything Lowenthal had written was true (which would have meant proving Alger Hiss had been framed), Lowenthal's publisher still had to show that "an honest person could express such views in the light of the material which Mr. Lowenthal knew at the time the article was published." In other words, the jury, after being walked through the evidence, both from the recently released secret American code-breaking program known as VENONA and from the KGB archives that Vassiliev claimed to have transcribed, had to believe that a reasonable person could still consider the case against Hiss not closed. These were ordinary British men and women, not historians, and just in case the defense couldn't convince them that "KGB documents had been misconstrued" to make it appear that Hiss was a spy, Cass's lawyers also claimed that Lowenthal's review was covered by "qualified privilege"—the greater latitude allowed when responding to an attack, in this case the attack on Hiss.

Vassiliev, who acted as his own lawyer, was not an impressive witness. On the arcane but crucial question of whether, in his unfettered trawl through KGB archives, he'd ever seen a single document linking Alger Hiss with "Ales"—the code name of a Soviet agent in the 1940s who, Weinstein and Vassiliev insisted, had to be Hiss—he admitted he hadn't. He also failed to provide a satisfactory account of just how he'd managed, despite being required to leave his files and notebook in a safe at the KGB press office at the end of each day, to smuggle out the notebooks with his extensive transcriptions of documents, which, he explained, he couldn't even ask to have photocopied, because the contents were considered Russian state secrets. Even so, with the law stacked heavily in his favor, and with testimonials to the certainty of Hiss's guilt from a veritable pantheon of historians (none of whom, however, including Allen Weinstein, deigned to testify in person), Vassiliev had every reason to expect victory. Which made the jury's verdict, delivered on Friday, June 13, 2003, such a blow.

Finding that Lowenthal had indeed implied a deliberate misreading of KGB documents regarding Hiss, the jury, based on what they'd seen and heard of the evidence, agreed that this was a conclusion an honest person might reach. The trial judge, Sir David Eady, who in recent years has been widely criticized in the British press for his alleged bias in favor of libel plaintiffs, also ruled against Vassiliev, holding that Lowenthal, in defending his friend Alger Hiss against the charge that he had betrayed his country, was also covered by qualified privilege. Vassiliev absorbed this unfolding catastrophe without showing any emotion. Only when the judge pronounced "an award of costs" did his shoulders seem to collapse under the weight of what he'd brought on himself.

Less than three months after his vindication in court, John Lowenthal died of cancer. As for Alexander Vassiliev, his assets didn't come close to covering his opponent's £70,000 costs. Surprisingly, the verdict barely registered in the press. Even *Express Gazette*, the Russian tabloid whose London bureau had obtained Vassiliev's British visa, seemed to have lost inter-

The Going

The cloth edge of certainty
has shredded down to this:
God and love are real,
but very far away.
If I go to Istanbul, will I return?
That is not one of the permitted questions.
When I go to Istanbul, how will I bear to return?
I could slip into the small streets
that lead away from the souk, then run east
to the high plain and the Caucasus—

It's all alone, the returning,
the going. The cloth,
a soft holland whose blocks of blue and lemon
once cheered me in a skirt,
now dries dishes. God and love
are very far away, farther even
than the mountains in the east.

APRIL BERNARD

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est. The last story I can find with his byline was in 2004—an article linking the maiden voyage of the *Queen Mary 2* with the *Titanic*. The headline is "Ship of Fools."

It was Alger Hiss who rescued Vassiliev. Unwilling to let his brother's work be forgotten, David Lowenthal, an emeritus professor of geography at the University of London, discovered some of the Vassiliev documents connected with the Hiss case among John's papers and made them available to historians. One document, titled "Failures in the USA (1938–1948)," was a December 23, 1949, memo from Anatoly Gorsky, the Soviet station chief in Washington, listing ninety-two people who, through their links to known defectors such as Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, had been compromised. Besides the presence of such well-known names as Alger and Donald Hiss, what made the Gorsky memo so fascinating was that it listed code names—of the kind that littered the VENONA decrypts—and names "in clear."

When John Earl Haynes, a historian at the Library of Congress and the author, with Harvey Klehr, of *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (1999), put the Gorsky memo on his website in early 2005, Vassiliev got in touch. Though he hadn't produced them during the trial, Vassiliev now seemed to have spirited all eight of the notebooks he'd compiled for *The Haunted Wood* from Moscow to London, where Haynes and Klehr flew to meet with him. With a grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation, a generous supporter of conservative causes, translations were commissioned. Those notebooks—their authenticity vouched for only by a man who couldn't persuade a London jury—form the basis of *Spies*, which claims not just finally to reveal "the motives of Americans who spied for Stalin" but decisively to resolve "specific, long-seething controversies."

It is impossible not to savor the irony of an alliance between two paladins of cold war triumphalism and Vassiliev, a man who, raised amid the squalid hypocrisies of the Brezhnev era, not only writes that "It was my dream to be a Soviet spy" but then goes on, with evident satisfaction, to note: "The vetting process started, and I was 'clean': no Jews in either my background or my wife's, no relatives abroad, already a member of the Soviet Communist Party." And it would be reckless to ignore the question of Vassiliev's circumstances in assessing the evidence he and his collaborators have assembled. Or to take on trust the Stakhanovite feat involved in transcribing or summarizing thousands of documents by hand in a period that, in Vassiliev's account, began in early 1994, slowed down significantly by mid-1995 and ended in January 1996—while also supposedly managing to write draft chapters of *The Haunted Wood* and transfer his notes and drafts onto floppy disks. But it would also be dishonest to pretend that most of us, offered the chance at a similar lode, whatever the caveats, would be so fastidious as to simply walk away.

If we look past Haynes and Klehr's blistering *ressentiment* and assume, as I shall for the remainder of this essay, that Vassiliev's notebooks are as represented, what do they tell us about the KGB, the Soviet Union and the astonishing cast of Americans—some of them Communists but many of them not—who interacted in various ways with the Soviet state, its clandestine organs and the American Communist Party? First, that very few of those described as "traitors" by Haynes and Klehr saw their actions as in any way inimical to the interests of the United States. (Vassiliev made this point repeatedly during the 2003 trial.) They may, of course, have simply been "in denial," but it is striking how often, in the relatively small fraction of Vassiliev's 1,115 pages of notes included in *Spies*, that even Americans like Julius Rosenberg, who engaged in the witting supply of classified information under the acknowledged direction of agents of a foreign power—a better definition of "spy" than any you will find in this book—were nonetheless careful to make clear their primary loyalty to the United States. Indeed, the later lives of a number of those "exposed" for the first time in *Spies*, having escaped the attention of McCarthy and his epigones, read like variations on the American Dream: Russell McNutt, an associate of Julius Rosenberg, became chief engineer of Gulf Oil; Bernard Redmont served as dean of Boston University's journalism program; Henry Ware went on to advise the Boy Scouts and to found the Reston, Virginia, Useful Services Exchange, a widely emulated barter network; Gerald Graze headed CUNY's research arm before joining the National Institutes of Health.

Spies never explains why we should believe KGB officers, pushed to justify their existence (and expense accounts), when they claim information comes from an elaborately recruited "agent" rather than merely a source or contact. *The Haunted Wood* cites a July 1941 report from Konstantine Umansky, the Soviet ambassador, on a conversation with Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, who asked "on my personal behalf to give me and Roosevelt the heads of German agents in the U.S." because the FBI was doing such

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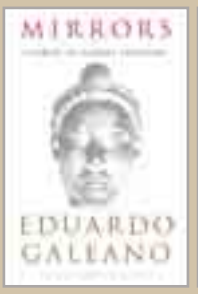
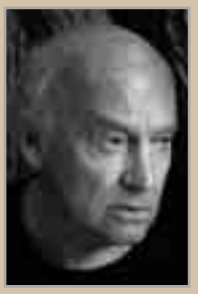
EDUARDO GALEANO ON TOUR





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a lousy job—letting Moscow know that Morgenthau and perhaps FDR didn't have confidence in J. Edgar Hoover. Haynes and Klehr don't mention this incident, yet they condemn Morgenthau's deputy Harry Dexter White for his own back-channel diplomacy. White was certainly a "source" of information. Indeed, there are official accounts of his contacts with the Soviets in American and Russian diplomatic archives. *Spies* quotes a 1944 memo from Vasily Zarubin, the KGB New York station chief, complaining that "'Jurist' [White] is rough around the edges and a lot of work has to be done on him before he will make a valuable informant. To date he has reported only what he deemed necessary…." White vociferously defended himself before the House Un-American Activities Committee in May 1948; three days later he was dead of a heart attack. Interestingly, Vassiliev's first draft of this material, buried in Weinstein's papers at Stanford, bore the title "*Istochniki v Vashingtone*"—in English, simply "Sources in Washington." Though closer to the truth, that clearly wasn't dramatic enough for Weinstein—or Haynes and Klehr.

Spies does flesh out our knowledge of "Enormous"—the Soviet effort to penetrate American atomic research. Moscow's persistent campaign to "turn" J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Oppenheimer's even more determined rebuff to each approach, is laid out in fascinating detail (though the authors seem to have gone out of their way to ignore Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin's account, based on American archives, of the same campaign from a different perspective in *American Prometheus*, their Pulitzer Prize–winning biography of Oppenheimer). *Spies* is invaluable in another way: it tells us what the SVR wants the West to know. This is apparent not only in what we are told: that the KGB successfully recruited scores of Americans; that it was the KGB and not Soviet physicists (or publicly available scientific information) that broke the US atomic monopoly; that the subsequent failures of Soviet intelligence after 1945 were due not to the self-immolation of Stalinism but the treachery of a few American turncoats. It is also apparent in what's left out: the granular detail of who reported which information at what time to whom—and even more important, the use made (or not made) of that information by policy-makers in Moscow.

Reading Vassiliev's digest of Soviet documents gives us a pretty good idea of Moscow's view of the world: treacherous, conspiratorial and subject to sudden seismic shifts (such as the Nazi-Soviet Pact or the campaign against Earl Browder, the only genuinely popular leader the CPUSA ever had). But this is also very much a view through the keyhole, and though every bit as titillating as such views often are, at best it offers a very partial (and much distorted) Soviet perspective on a much more complex American reality.

Spies fleshes out the case of 'Enormous': the Soviet effort to penetrate US atomic research.

The charge that I.F. Stone, the legendary investigative journalist and one-time Washington correspondent for this magazine, was a paid agent of the KGB has been a staple of far-right smear tactics since the early 1990s. Such attacks have in the past rested on two equally shaky legs: the on-again, off-again testimony of Oleg Kalugin, a retired KGB general who implicates Stone every time he has a book to sell (and then issues a "clarification" explaining that Stone was merely a contact, not a spy, after each episode); and the purported identification of Stone with "Blin," the Russian word for "pancake" and the code name of an American journalist who figures in three of the messages between KGB agents in the United States and Moscow decoded under the VENONA project. Kalugin, a skillful self-publicist who once tried to peddle the idea that the Soviets detained American POWs in Vietnam long after the end of the war, doesn't deserve to be taken seriously. But the VENONA messages are real, albeit problematic: the National Security Agency long resisted releasing the Russian texts, and the English versions in the public domain include a great deal of tendentious annotation, much of it apparently the work of Robert Lamphere, the FBI's liaison to the project. They are also ambiguous—not least about the apparently simple matter of Blin's identity.

The first mention of Blin occurs in VENONA 1313, a message from New York to Moscow dated September 13, 1944, summarizing the so-far-unsuccessful efforts of Vladimir Pravdin, a Tass correspondent in Washington, to meet with Blin, who "occupies a very prominent position in the journalistic world and has vast connections." Blin next appears in VENONA 1506, an October 23, 1944, update from New York ascribing Blin's reluctance to the fact that he "had three children and did not want to attract the attention of the KhATA [FBI]." It is noted, however, that Blin "earns as much as 1500 dollars a month but, it seems, he would not be averse to having a supplementary income." When these two messages were first decoded in the 1950s, there was considerable disagreement within the FBI about Blin's identity. Lamphere based his identification on the fact that Stone had three children and was Washington correspondent for *PM*, the left-wing New York daily, as well as *The Nation*. But what really clinched it for him was VENONA 1433, an operational report from New York to Moscow, which noted that Pravdin "is studying Joseph Barnes and I. Stone, who for the time being is avoiding [him]."

Not all of Lamphere's colleagues were convinced. The FBI's Washington field office noted that Blin was described as "earning as much as 1500 dollars a month," while "the income of Stone…was considerably less than that." (In 1944, Stone's combined salary was $975 a month.) The New York field office was even more skeptical, arguing that Blin "must have been a person whose true pro-Soviet sympathies were not known to the public and his associates." New York concluded that "I.F. Stone would not appear to be identical with [Blin]" and suggested that "Ernest K. Lindley was perhaps a better suspect." (Lindley was a *Newsweek* Washington bureau chief who died in 1979.) Two other factors tend to rule out Stone. First, as probably the most persistent and high-profile critic of J. Edgar Hoover in Washington, he had no hope of avoiding the FBI's notice. Also, the message naming I.F. Stone "in clear" was transmitted on October 10—between the two messages referring to Blin.

None of this mattered to Hoover, who, delighted to have this gadfly in his sights, authorized making Stone the target of a full-blown espionage investigation. Hoover's men opened his mail, tapped his phone, rifled through his garbage and subjected him and his family to daily surveillance—without finding a scrap of evidence that Stone was anything other than the unrepentant, and independent, American radical he seemed. Nor did it matter to Haynes and Klehr, who in *Venona* simply parroted Lamphere's identification of Blin without bothering to analyze the evidence. Yet even Haynes and Klehr were forced to concede "there is no evidence in Venona that Stone ever was recruited by the KGB." Now in *Spies* they claim to have proof that Stone "was a Soviet spy" who "was a fully active agent" over a period of "several years."

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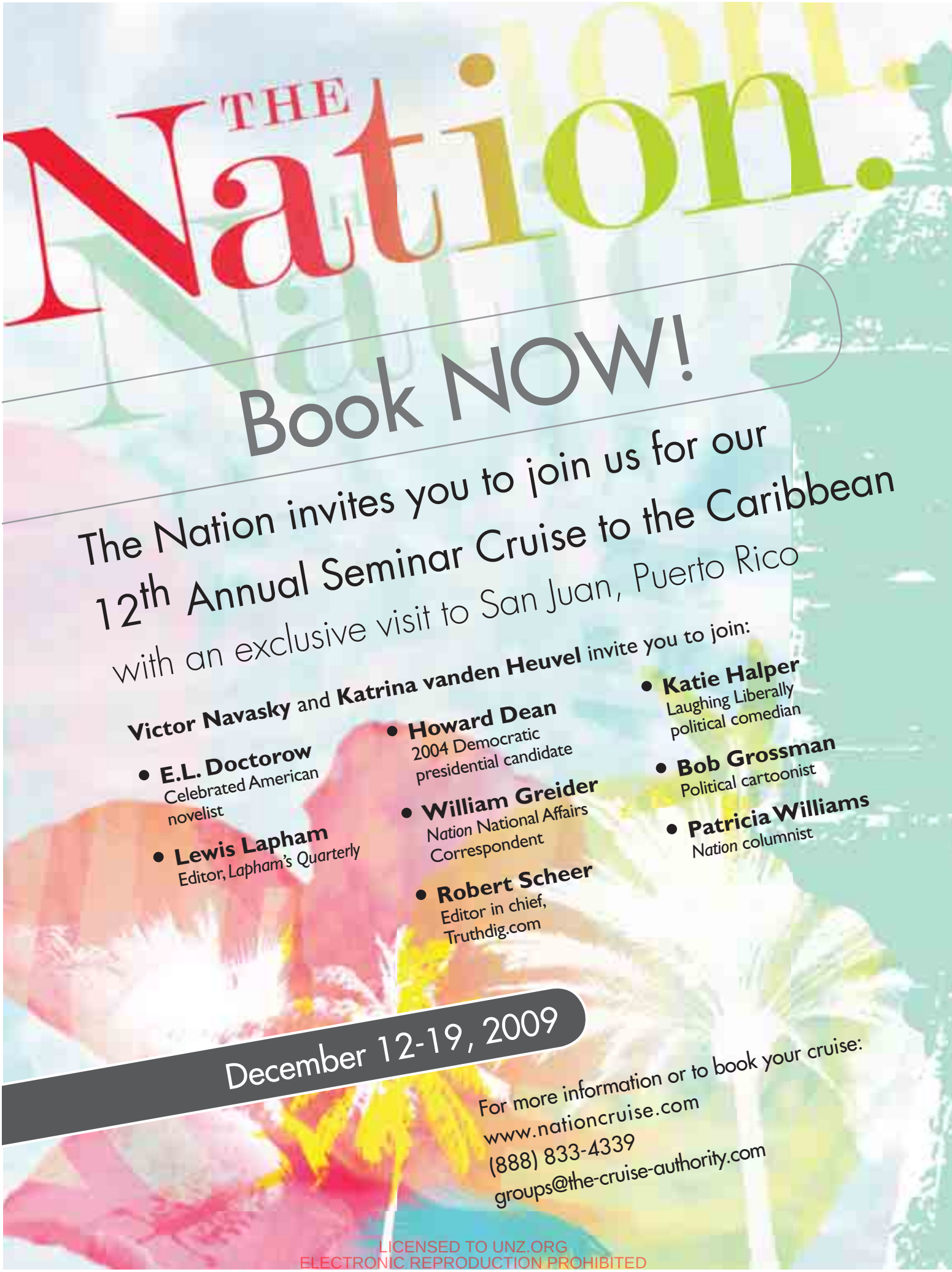

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What is this proof? On page 144 of *Spies* we see what purports to be Vassiliev's handwritten Russian notes. Halfway down the page it says: "'Blin' ('Liberal's' lead)—Isidore Feinstein, a commentator for the New York Post." Liberal, according to the authors, was Frank Palmer, managing editor of Federated Press, a labor wire service. The English text claims that this note comes from an April 13, 1936, memo from KGB New York to Moscow, though whether Vassiliev was summarizing or transcribing we are not told. Farther down the same page is another handwritten Russian text, which claims (in May 1936) that "Relations with 'Pancake' [Stone] have entered 'the channel of normal operational work.' He went to Washington on assignment for his newspaper. Connections in the State Dep. and Congress." (The single quotes around "normal operational work" are clearly meant as the historical equivalent of furious cello bowing on the soundtrack.) "Over the next several years, documents recorded in Vassiliev's notebooks make clear, Stone worked closely with the KGB."

In *Spies*, why do the mistakes about I.F. Stone all tend to go in the same direction?

This is a blanket claim for which the authors supply precisely two instances: in May 1936 Blin reported that Karl Von Wiegand, Berlin correspondent for the Hearst agency, "had been ordered to maintain friendly relations with Hitler." Also that William Randolph Hearst supposedly had a deal to supply the Nazis with copper. Von Wiegand, disagreeing with Hearst's policy, reportedly "turned to Pancake's boss for advice." Then in an August 1936 memo it was suggested that Pancake let William Dodd Jr., son of the American ambassador to Germany, know "that he has the means to connect him with an anti-Fascist organization in Berlin." That's it—I.F. Stone's entire espionage career! He passed along gossip about Hearst and was in contact with Dodd—in 1936 a man whose sister, Martha Dodd Stern, if *Spies* is to be believed, had for two years been the lover of a KGB agent in Berlin and was already on Moscow's books herself.

If Haynes and Klehr weren't so serious, this would be funny. But since they are, perhaps I can be forgiven for pointing out that the KGB file that Vassiliev now says includes Agent Pancake's confidential report on Hearst (File 35112, volume 5) is not the one (File 3463, volume 1) he credited with the claim in *The Haunted Wood* that "a *New York Post* reporter codenamed 'Blin' volunteered information" about William Randolph Hearst. Though he had exactly the same material in front of him, in *The Haunted Wood* Vassiliev never identified Blin. Of course, anybody can make a mistake. But the mistakes in *Spies* all tend to go in the same direction.

When *Spies* quotes from VENONA 1506, the authors leave out the figure for Blin's income; they also leave out the words "it seems," transforming what is clearly the writer's speculation into a firm report of Blin's willingness to make extra income. *Spies* cites a 1944 KGB report on Victor Perlo, an economist at the War Production Board, saying that in 1942–43 Perlo "secretly helped 'Pancake' [Stone] compile material for various exposés by the latter." Judging by how frequently his name appears in VENONA, Perlo seems to have been a very energetic source for the Soviets; at the time of his death in 1999 he was chief economist of the CPUSA, where his contributions to Marxist-Leninist thought apparently merited a full-length article in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. That he also acted as a source for Stone, whose coverage of defense production in *PM* and *The Nation* was described as "absolutely essential in the public interest" by Harry Truman, at the time chair of the Senate Defense Committee, merely shows that Stone was a good reporter.

Of course, *Spies* cites this as evidence that despite Stone's vociferous, and very public, criticism of Moscow and the CPUSA after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, he "quickly reverted to a pro-Soviet position." But *Spies* also says that in 1945 the KGB, trying to assess the damage caused by Elizabeth Bentley's defection, asked Perlo for a list of people he knew "who had a present or past connection with a Soviet intelligence agency." The language is loose enough to cover a range of interactions, from witting agent to unwitting source. Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, according to VENONA an energetic clandestine agent, is on the list, as is Alger Hiss. So is Al Blumberg, the very public head of the CPUSA in Baltimore, linked to Herbert Schimmel, who in the 1940s was on the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on War Mobilization; neither man was ever suspected of spying. *But Perlo's list does not include I.F. Stone*. Nor, though *Spies* quotes from it only selectively, does Gorsky's later, and far more comprehensive, inventory of American sources.

If Hayes and Klehr can't be relied on to acknowledge internal evidence that contradicts their thesis, their command of the external evidence—the overall historical context—is even less convincing. Ever since Arthur Schlesinger Jr. outed him in a footnote to *The Politics of Upheaval*, it has been known that the "Abelard Stone" who in 1933 wrote that FDR's election had closed "the road to a Soviet America, the one way out that could make a real difference to the working classes" was I.F. Stone. It is also perfectly true, as Haynes and Klehr observe, that this view "reflected the position of the CPUSA." Indeed, it is probably fair to say that 1933 represented the perigee of I.F. Stone's relationship with the Communist Party. But any honest account of Stone's path would also note that Abelard Stone's fear that the New Deal was heading toward fascism was widely shared by many on the left, like the Socialist leader Norman Thomas, who never went anywhere near the CP. More important, Stone published his remarks in *Modern Monthly*, a Trotskyist magazine whose editor, V.F. Calverton, had just been denounced by the CP as "a maturing fascist" and "sex racketeer."

I don't find it at all hard to believe that in 1936 I.F. Stone would have happily traded information with a Tass correspondent, whether or not he suspected the man had other duties. That's what journalists did, and still do, including many, like Nicholas Daniloff, arrested by the Soviets in 1986, or *Washington Post* editorial writer Stephen Rosenfeld, whose relationship with Communism even Haynes and Klehr would find beyond reproach. And though the CP's attack on Calverton also probably lost them I.F. Stone, who soon became an enthusiastic New Dealer, Stone's overarching political preoccupation throughout the 1930s was the danger of fascism. It was fear of domestic American fascism, very much including the Hearst empire, during the Roosevelt recession of 1937 that led Stone to do something he still felt guilty about half a century later: change his name from Isidore Feinstein. It also happens to be true that, like "Blin," Stone went to Washington in May 1936, writing afterward to Thomas Corcoran, FDR's political lieutenant, "it was great fun to meet you and Ben Cohen and the beautiful Peggy." (The team of Corcoran and Cohen were the New Deal's foremost legal draftsmen; Corcoran's secretary Peggy Dowd, a famous capital beauty and a cousin of *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, soon became Mrs. Corcoran.) But Stone's State Department contacts were nonexistent. He probably did

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know Frank Palmer (though as *Spies* notes, Palmer broke with the CP in 1937). Stone's brother Marc worked for Federated Press—and as A.B. Magil, a former editor of *New Masses* who knew both brothers told me, Marc Stone actually was a Communist.

Even if *Spies* proved that in 1936 Blin really was Stone (which it doesn't), there is no reason to assume, given Moscow's frequent recycling of cover names, that 1944's evasive "Blin" was the same man. At different times "Bumblebee" was Ethel Rosenberg's brother David Greenglass—or Walter Lippmann! And there is an abundance of evidence weighing against Stone's ever subjecting himself to any form of Communist discipline—let alone serving as a witting collaborator with the KGB. Indeed, it was Stone's use of Kremlin spies as a term of abuse in a 1936 *Post* editorial that first brought him to the attention of J. Edgar Hoover. "The FBI is carrying on OGPU tactics" against organized labor, Stone complained, which prompted the bureau to report: "He is of Jewish descent and [redacted] advises that he is very arrogant, very loud spoken, wears thick, heavy glasses and is most obnoxious personally." Stone was deeply grateful for Moscow's willingness to supply weapons to the embattled Spanish republic—a gratitude that, however misplaced, probably also inhibited his response to Stalin's purge trials. Yet he still wrote in 1935 that "Stalin is using the Kiroff assassination as an excuse for weeding out anyone who disagrees with his views," and in August 1936 he argued that charges of a terrorist plot by Old Bolsheviks, or "of a link between Hitler and Trotzky, seem fantastic." In January 1937, he told *Post* readers: "The Moscow trials require one to believe either (1) that Leon Trotzky is a monster or (2) that Joseph Stalin is a monster."

Nathaniel Weyl told me that in 1937, when he also was working at the *Post*, Stone asked for his help in finding "someone who could give him the true Soviet explanations of Stalin's actions as contrasted with the nonsense that Moscow was disseminating to the general public." Weyl said that he'd been part of a secret CP unit of fellow New Dealers that included Alger Hiss, though he added that nothing improper ever happened at their meetings. Weyl became an enthusiastic "friendly witness" in the 1950s, and by the time I spoke with him had long nursed a ripe hatred of Stone, with whom he'd sparred over Cuba in the 1960s. Which is one reason I believed him when he said that if Stone had been in the party, or had better Soviet sources, "he wouldn't have gone to me. He would have gone to Browder. I thought of him as a fellow traveler."

In 1937 Stone was a fellow traveler; he freely admitted as much. But when, in the fall of 1939, he wrote to his friend Michael Blankfort (a screenwriter who also became a friendly witness in the 1950s) that "I'm off the Moscow axis," he meant it. The pact disgusted him—and the CPUSA's slippery rationalizations disgusted him even more. When the Russians invaded Finland in November 1939, Stone compared the attack to the Nazi attacks on Spain.

Stone's disillusionment didn't drive him out of the left. Nor did it blind him to the role of the Red Army in the fight against Nazism. Bitter as he was during the period when, in his phrase, "the umbrella flew over the Kremlin," after Germany attacked the Soviet Union he rejoiced: Hitler "has 'landed' a huge anti-Nazi army on the Continent." The Russians had joined his fight. Stone's contempt for J. Edgar Hoover was more than enough to have kept him from running to the FBI in 1944. But "Blin" or blintz, he never again saw the Soviet Union through rose-colored glasses. Klehr and Haynes distort Stone's views on the Korean War, accusing him of reporting that South Korea "invad[ed] the Communist North," something he never did, just as they are wrong to claim that it was "not until the mid-1950s" that he "lost his illusions" about Stalinism. That had happened in 1939. His famous 1956 report from Moscow—"*This is not a good society* and it is not led by honest men"—was rather a warning to his fellow leftists that Khrushchev was no friend of freedom either.

In the course of their noble, if belated, exoneration of Robert Oppenheimer, the authors write: "There are reports *about* him by Soviet spies, not reports *from* him." Precisely the same is true of I.F. Stone, who, as it happened, defended Oppenheimer in the 1950s, when doing so took courage. Similarly, they dismiss any suspicion of Walter Lippmann ("Bumblebee") as ridiculous; his meetings with the same Tass correspondent whom Stone avoided were merely professional contacts with "a Soviet journalist with whom he traded insights and information."

> Jacoby is often acute and witty on the national psychosis that the Hiss case represents.

In a sane world, the supposed new material on Alger Hiss in *Spies*—and perhaps more important, the documents cited but used misleadingly by the authors—would raise many of the same questions. There is a KGB report from 1938 in which Iskhak Akhmerov, newly appointed New York station chief, writes, "I don't know for sure who Hiss is connected with." Far more troubling for those who consider the case against Hiss closed is the Gorsky memo, which, as quoted (accurately) in *Spies*, lists Alger Hiss under the code name "Leonard." From John Lowenthal's article to the present, much of the current controversy regarding Hiss concerns his identification with "Ales"—an agent who figures in numerous VENONA cables but who, when the material was originally released, was identified merely as "probably Alger Hiss." It was this uncertainty that Allen Weinstein claimed to have removed in *The Haunted Wood*. And it was this uncertainty that was the subject of a 2007 article by Kai Bird and Svetlana Chervonnaya in *The American Scholar* (an expanded version is available on the magazine's website). Gorsky, who in addition to his role as KGB *rezident* was also First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, certainly knew who "Ales" was. He is, for example, the author of VENONA 1822, dated March 1945, which refers to the presence of Ales at Yalta, as well as another cable from March, not in VENONA but found in the documents Vassiliev submitted to court, that places Ales in Mexico City (at a time when Hiss was already back in Washington). The problem is not the whereabouts of Ales, however, but the fact that Gorsky, in his comprehensive résumé of damage to the American networks, didn't connect Hiss with Ales.

Why does this matter? Precisely because 1938 is not 1945. As Susan Jacoby points out in *Alger Hiss and the Battle for History*, among Americans who had an opinion on the matter in 1938, 75 percent supported the Spanish Republicans (backed by Moscow). In 1938 the Soviet Union was a potential ally against fascism, not an enemy. Until the Foreign Agents Registration Act became law in 1938, the KGB's activities in America weren't even illegal. Nor was belonging to the American Communist Party—even secretly—or meeting like-minded comrades after work, or even passing along information you thought might help the party to take an informed view of what the New Deal was really trying to achieve. Whittaker Chambers had no knowledge of Hiss after his own break with Communism in 1938. Yet as Jacoby notes, it is only the charge that "Hiss was a lying Communist Party member taking orders from the

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Kremlin as well as a State Department aide at the Yalta conference" that turned him into a poster boy for treason, symbolizing not just the resentment over "betrayal" at Yalta that Richard Nixon would ride into the White House but also, as Jacoby puts it, the "long-held right-wing contention that if you scratched a New Deal liberal, you might just as easily find a socialist or a communist." Jacoby is often acute and surprisingly witty on the national psychosis that the Hiss case represents. But her nervous profession of her belief in Hiss's guilt—like her willingness to write an entire book on the case without ever examining the evidence—strongly suggests that we are still far from living in a sane world. At least not as far as Alger Hiss is concerned.

I'll never be a Hiss scholar. I don't have the patience to sift through the minutiae of typewriter serial numbers and Persian rugs and who got the Hiss family's old Ford. Though my mind is less tightly closed now, the thought of joining the ranks of Hiss obsessives still leaves me cold.

Nevertheless, I have a question for those who take comfort in the certainty that Hiss, though guilty, was an exceptional case—or the victim of a vast right-wing conspiracy: what if McCarthy was right? Not about Communists in the State Department or Owen Lattimore (a case that, though almost as celebrated as Hiss's, merits only a passing mention in the footnotes of *Spies*; but then Lattimore really was innocent). But what if the New Deal was riddled with idealistic young radicals, some of them Communists, some Socialists, some Trotskyists, even some anarchists? How much of the great transformation of American society under FDR—agencies like the WPA that lifted millions from poverty to purpose and programs like Social Security and the TVA—derived its energy from not a cadre but a cohort of unabashed radicals who realized that the machinery of the state was available for what seemed like revolutionary ends, and proceeded to use it? And who saw the Popular Front not as a cynical stratagem but as a genuine turn toward a social democratic politics where on the central questions—industrial democracy and racial tolerance in America, antifascism in Europe—they had far more in common than anyone suspected?

Of course, all this ended with the Nazi-Soviet Pact. And while the New Deal lasted, it was a heyday for those willing to exploit it—though my research on the New Deal suggests that even the KGB's unwitting accomplices didn't amount to more than a tiny fraction of Washington's reds. But must we keep pretending it never happened? ■

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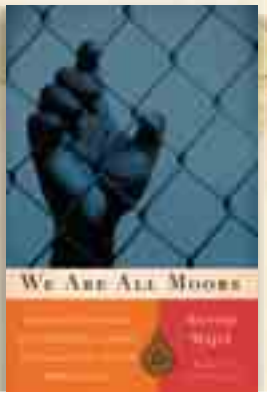

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C.S. Lewis at work in his home, The Kilns, at Oxford, in 1960

Into the Wardrobe

by JORDAN DAVIS

Born in 1898 to a Belfast solicitor and his mathematics-trained wife, C.S. Lewis, or Jack, as he preferred to be called, was deemed by his tutor for the Oxford entrance exams to have been "born with the literary temperament," and "while admirably adapted for excellence and probably for distinction in literary matters, he is adapted for nothing else." It was true. An admirer of Beatrix Potter, young Jack wrote talking-animal novels and came to have hopes of success as a poet. One thing got in the way: he was not a poet. And not, by the way, in the manner in which Ford Madox Ford wasn't a poet—Ford in his poems lived up to his standard that poetry should be at least as well written as prose. Lewis talked down to himself in his poems; this is the fatal flaw in much of what we know as bad poetry.

Lewis was, however, an uncanny reader of poetry, able to find sense and sensuousness in the bleakest thickets of verse. Fancy and fresh expression attracted Lewis; ponderousness and absurd muddle drew his scorn. In *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, his contribution to the *Oxford History of English Literature*, he brings forth worthy phrases and lines from dozens of authors lost to time, from Jasper Heywood to Thomas Nuce to John Studley, who among the dross also wrote, "Who lysteth to the flaterying Maremaides note/Must needes commit his tyred eyes to sleepe," and such pleasant memorable inventions as "frostyface," "topsy-turvy" and "Stygian puddle glum."

Lewis's life, too, was topsy-turvy. Within two weeks of the death of his mother, 9-year-old Jack was sent by his father to a boarding school in England run by a sadist who would be forced out of his job in disgrace. The next school Jack attended was not much better. He read and endured. In 1917 he won a scholarship and was elected to University College at Oxford, but before he was settled into his rooms he went to the war. Lewis and his roommate Paddy Moore entered into a pact, in the event that either one made the ultimate sacrifice, to look after the other's family.

Janie "Minto" Moore survived her son, and she and her young daughter came to live with Lewis at Oxford. She stayed for more than thirty years. (The truly odd thing about this arrangement is that Mr. Moore was alive.) Lewis referred to her, when he did at all, as his foster mother, but there is little doubt among his biographers that their relationship was, early on at least, more romantic than filial. A confirmed atheist since the death of his mother, Lewis insisted that Moore's daughter spend Sunday mornings in church, leaving them at home alone. After the death of Lewis's father ten years later, Lewis's alcoholic older brother, Warnie, moved in as well. Warnie observed that Moore, who once referred to C.S. Lewis as an extra maid, never let him work more than half an hour without interrupting his reading and writing with errands.

Despite the interruptions, Lewis published twenty books during his thirty years with Moore—lectures, essays, radio talks, science fiction and fantasy novels, apologetics and works of literary history, ranging in quality from pedantic to inspired, mere opinion to glorious pastiche. (It was during these years that Lewis rediscovered his faith, eventually coming to prominence in the United States as a popular theologian, gracing the cover of *Time* for his success with *Mere Christianity* and *The Screwtape Letters*.) The last book of Lewis's to go to press in Moore's lifetime was the first in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, published in 1950.

In the first few pages of the book, four children are sent out of London to spend the summer in the country. Almost immediately, the youngest, Lucy, takes hide-and-seek shelter in a spare-room armoire and discovers that it leads out to a snowy forest. Lewis presents it as a matter of fact:

> Next moment she found that what was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. "Why, it is just like branches of trees!" exclaimed Lucy. And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. Something cold and

The Magician's Book
A Skeptic's Adventures in Narnia.
By Laura Miller.
Little, Brown. 311 pp. $25.99.

Jordan Davis's poems have appeared recently in Fence, Gulf Coast *and* The Nation.

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> soft was falling on her. A moment later she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air.

In his criticism and the Narnia books, Lewis puts a premium on lush physical description, going beyond sight and sound to emphasize smell, taste and touch whenever possible. And he has the knack for what Soviet critic Viktor Shklovsky called *ostranenie*, or "enstrangement"—presenting familiar objects, scenes, feelings or even religious beliefs in an unfamiliar light so that the reader can experience them as if for the first time. These are indispensable qualities of Lewis's best work, but they do not in themselves explain the fervor with which young readers form lifelong attachments to his stories.

In *The Magician's Book*, Laura Miller has written an account of returning as an adult to the Narnia books, trying to understand what in them stunned her 9-year-old self into a life of wanting nothing more than to read. It is a strange, often dispiriting book, announcing itself as both memoir and literary criticism; in fact, Miller submerges her own story and never quite focuses completely on the work at hand or, for that matter, on what in Lewis's reading helped lead him to create an imaginary place she once longed to visit. Miller's declared goal is to illuminate the Narnia books' "other, unsung dimensions, especially the deep roots of the Chronicles in the universal experiences of childhood and in English literature." What Miller ends up doing is revisiting for a while the pleasure of identifying wholeheartedly with a character in a story.

This immersion, incidentally, was a particular interest of Lewis's. His remarkable book-length essay *An Experiment in Criticism* is an attempt to suspend labeling books as good or bad. Instead, looking closely at what people do when they read, he works from the premise that discussion of books takes place only among that small, odd group of readers who take pure pleasure in reading and rereading books not for self-improvement or snob appeal but because going even a few days without reading makes them ill. The many, he writes, read books to gratify personal wishes, finding what they look for, as opposed to hearing what the books have to say, experiencing what they mean to do to the reader. Unfamiliar description is, for this kind of reader, an impediment, "like trying to sell him something he has no use for at a price he does not wish to pay." And the necessary conditions of good writing—excitement, mystery and what comes of seeking happiness—are mistaken for sufficient. Lewis diagnoses the habit of reading to identify with characters as "castle-building," the egoistic fantasizing dramatized in the (soon to be remade) Danny Kaye comedy *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. It is, he acknowledges, a pleasurable way to read, and it isn't fatal. He cites Anthony Trollope as an example of someone who began as a castle-builder and who went on to imagine worlds not entirely populated by himself. But for a critic, it is not the ideal mode when looking for what makes a book. There is, after all, something besides the reader to find.

Miller is aware of this, signs on and proceeds to erect Mont Saint-Michel.

> To me, Lucy Pevensie was both an alter ego and a clear glass. Through her I could see the action of the first three Chronicles undistorted; her response to everything felt as fresh and natural as a breeze, because it was so close to my own.... Even today I find it hard to secure any perspective on her. "Lucy goes straight to your heart," Neil Gaiman observes, and once she is ensconced there, it's impossible to step far enough away from her to take her in.

Gaiman, a heavyweight fantasy novelist, is one of the big names Miller invokes throughout the book—Jonathan Franzen and Susanna Clarke are two others. Having cast herself as Lucy, perhaps Miller needed to fill the roles of Peter, Edmund and Susan. In Miller's defense, she keeps her eyes on Lewis's enduring appeal. She retraces her steps, interviewing the schoolteacher who gave her the first Narnia book in second grade, recalling her reading of other children's classics, from *Little Women* to *Mary Poppins* to the *Little House* books to *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. She observes the poetic naming activity of a friend's twin toddlers, and their animalistic, affectionate reactions to the world and the objects, animals and people in it. She visits Lewis's Oxford home and surveys English and Irish landscapes for some sign of the day residue that led Lewis to dream up the other world she still half wants to find.

These exercises don't get Miller any closer to understanding what attracts her to Lewis's books, but they do furnish her with picturesque settings for making several good debatable points: stories about children are better when the protagonists have no parents; characters should be flawed but not obnoxious; common sense and useful knowledge are rare and valuable; all readers look for the story automatically, the way all audiences listen for subject, verb and object. They also lead her to some remarks that would likely have surprised Lewis: that many adults view growing up as a tragedy; that she was a lot like Lewis as a child; that the "characters in books can never really be our friends because as much as we might learn about them, they can never know anything about us."

When it comes to understanding the books as the outgrowth of a particular place and time, Miller is adequate. Her general sense of Lewis as a bluff, bookish, somewhat sadomasochistic character follows the lead of A.N. Wilson's excellent biography. Her Lewis squares more with the composite picture that emerges from Lewis's oeuvre than does, say, the quiet bachelor Lewis of the radio-play-turned-movie *Shadowlands*. Miller's prose, though, is as general as her sense: she misses the details that make the story. For example, she reports that Lewis fell behind socially partly because of an awkwardness at sports, but she neglects to mention that Lewis lacked middle thumb joints.

As for treating the Narnia books as literature, Miller begins promisingly. Justifying her interest in Lewis-as-writer, as opposed to Lewis the apologist, she states that the Narnia books have not succeeded in overturning her resistance to Christianity, that they furthermore are not allegories and that she will not be taking up the religious aspect of the stories. But by his own testimony Lewis did indeed find himself retelling the story of Christianity for children: "Supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday School associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency." The Passion of Christ provides his first book with a shape, and Genesis and Revelation are behind his sixth and seventh books, *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*. But the second through fifth books derive more clearly from secular books, some from altogether non-Christian traditions: the *Odyssey*, the *Metamorphoses*, the *Arabian Nights*, the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, *The Faerie Queene*, *Gulliver's Travels*, the poems of W.B. Yeats, the fairy tales of George MacDonald. Lewis's aim was always to tell stories, to do something with the pictures he saw: "Some people seem to think I began by asking myself how

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I could say something about Christianity to children.... I couldn't write in that way at all. Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion." A skeptic of humanism, an anti-Modernist and an eventual Flat Earth Society member, Lewis nevertheless shared with his rival T.S. Eliot a profound need to rework beloved sources into new shapes. (I suspect that, having survived trench warfare, he viewed the Modernists as tourists of chaos.)

One of Lewis's main critical points in *The Discarded Image* and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* is that the so-called Renaissance in English letters was not a return to classical models but a rejection of the considerable systematic achievement of the medieval thinkers. Where others saw the new emphasis on the originality of individual authors as a shift of Copernican proportions, Lewis saw it as a tragedy of the Commons, a privatizing of the shared inheritance. Miller gets it half right, praising Lewis's spirited syncretism, while mislabeling it "medievalist." It's true that Lewis and his Oxford colleague J.R.R. Tolkien are mutually responsible for the armor-and-cleavage circuit of Renaissance Faires and Medieval Festivals, but Lewis never dreamed of returning to feudalism and poor sanitation. He did see a major shift, though; in his inaugural address at Cambridge he sees the great divide coming sometime between Jane Austen and ourselves.

After going around the world looking for an imaginary place, Miller does finally begin to treat the Narnia books as learned syntheses of Lewis's reading, while preserving her sense that there is more to them than that. Inapt comparisons of Lewis and Tolkien to Wordsworth and Coleridge aside, she touches at last on the books as books, having mentioned many of the likely strands that went into their making. She identifies the mouse-warrior Reepicheep and the Marsh-wiggle Puddleglum as two of Lewis's best creations. She discourses briefly on the work of Lewis's friend, the independent scholar Owen Barfield. She gestures toward the critical abyss of myth but stays clear of its enchantments. She even finds herself examining Lewis's habits of reading in much the way he outlines in *An Experiment in Criticism*. In the end, though, she remains at a loss to say how Lewis bound those strands. "Today, I wonder how Lewis managed to make all this feel as if it belongs together, in the same book. As a child I took it for granted, though if asked I might have said that *The Magician's Nephew* was as rich as plumcake." It is noble and appropriate for a critic to acknowledge a gap in understanding, but this is a canyon. Miller judges the various books—she prefers the episodic (and to my mind, static) quest narrative *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to the freed-slave-royal-twin story *The Horse and His Boy*—but she does not provide a coherent theory of their magic.

I'll take a crack at it. What holds the story together is Lewis, or rather, the benevolent, attentive, encouraging narrator and his occasional presence in the story disguised as a professor, a dwarf, a badger, a lion. His is a sane and playful presence, not tame and never thoughtless. Though great danger is always imminent in Narnia, there is a profound sense of excitement, of mystery, of being loved. This sense is difficult to accomplish but also impossible to counterfeit. Lewis manages it partly through frequent second-person digressions keyed to the experience of any bright but otherwise ordinary 9-year-old, the age at which he lost his mother. Most of all, he forms a bond with young readers by pledging again and again to believe them by proxy: in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lucy persists in believing that she has gone to another world, and despite the betrayal of her brother Edmund, the other children go there with her. (To my knowledge, no one has followed up on the aside that Edmund's perverse, hateful behavior began when he was sent away to boarding school.) What continues to draw children to Lewis is not only the pleasure of traveling to a world that sounds better than this one but the promise of his company, so entertaining and learned, and so light about it.

Miller has written about Lewis before, mainly for *Salon*, where she is a senior writer. She reports that her first Lewis piece for *Salon*, a 1996 note on rereading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, prompted a greater volume of response than anything else she'd written. Also that year, film critic David Denby published *Great Books*, the story of his midlife return to Columbia College to see what had become of the books and classrooms that shaped him. There is a touch of pathos, a busman's holiday quality, to his and Miller's projects. *The Magician's Book* may well reach the many who saw themselves in that piece. Perhaps this skeptic's adventures will also send readers back to Narnia and to the rest of Lewis's work, or better still, to the work Lewis loved. If *An Experiment in Criticism* is any guide, though, Lewis would have doubted it. ■

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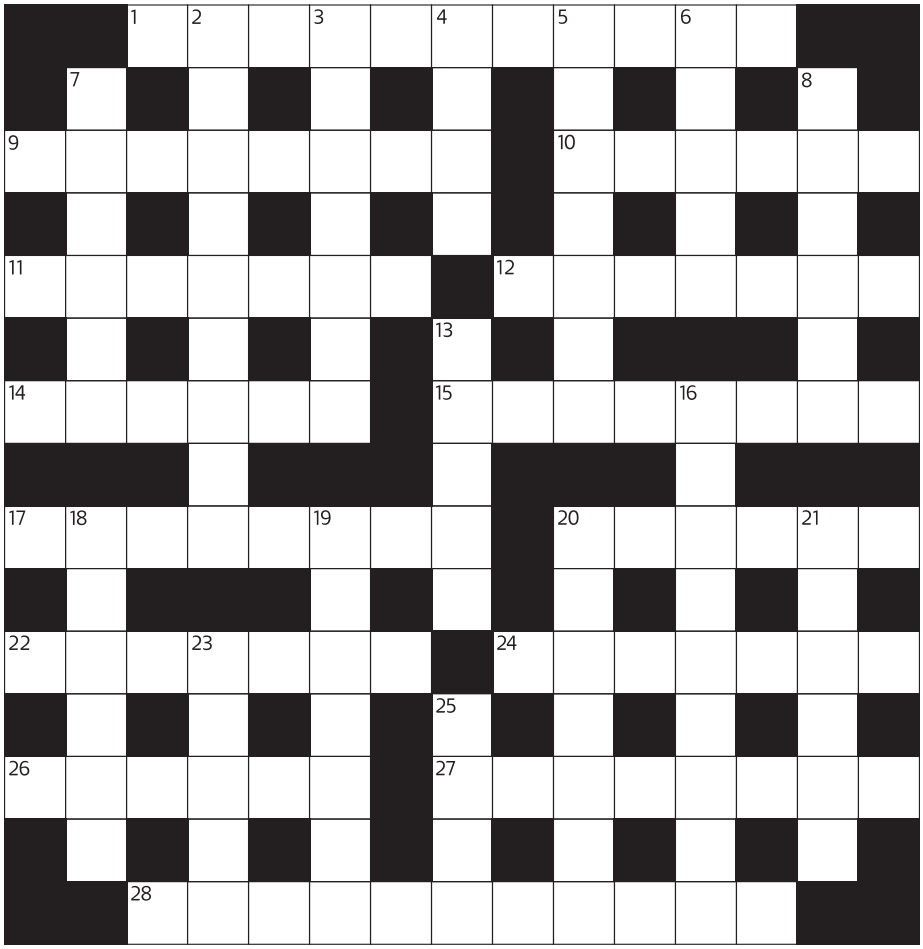

ACROSS

1 Not quite grade-A, but our little George is present, that is, and they're mainly concerned with property values. (11)

9 Do a little sparring with an important member of the church. (Might look good in your yard!) (3,5)

10 The salad gets et, too, by the sound of it—just as he said, finally. (6)

11 An ill-bred man—a Scot—but from a French colony. (7)

12 It's supposed to put the little one to sleep, with a little quiet when the baby doesn't start to make it. (7)

14 Leave someone ashore with a few pearls, for instance. (6)

15 A real top type—right? Gets sort of beat—and embittered! (8)

17 Turn around and around with the rest shook up—just like a little old lady nobody wanted! (8)

20 Associated with trees, poetically…(6)

22 …with what's left of the tree going to the news boss, in short—not knowing the answer. (7)

24 A classic tale on the broken-up street in Paris—to find a person of taste. (7)

26 The sort of sting has nothing but bars associated with them. (6)

27 Possibly the main date would be fixed up in cartoon fashion. (8)

28 Refusing any change, running for office like little Mr. Henry. (8,3)

DOWN

2 Finished pale and wan—or just too much removed? (9)

3 and **20** Do his tales explain natural history? Just so! (7,7)

4 see 8

5 It's chic, as I hear this puzzle is, to ensure that something is not left out. (7)

6 One fateful day? To Little Albert, it's perfect! (5)

7 Mr. Sawyer, pet, is to sleep with lots of women. (6)

8 and **4** The head of the synagogue starts to cry, but they really get the picture! (6,4)

13 Africa dream reveals the nucleus of the group. (5)

16 Byzantine cabal comes together by volcanic flow to make a covering that might be used in a stickup. (9)

18 "I'm on this!" means you've lost power. (6)

19 Square on the justification you'll find a crime against this magazine, or so it sounds. (7)

20 see 3

21 One of 4 on the upcoming study made money. (6)

23 Count this—it means I won't join! (2,3)

25 Charge me subjectively—it takes me where I want to go. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3169

A	D	D	R	E	S	S	T	H	E		B	A	L	L
V		O		L		A		O		D		R		A
E	A	R	M	U	F	F		B	O	R	A	C	I	C
R		M		D		E		B		U		H		K
	T	A	P	E	S	T	R	Y		G	R	A	I	L
B		N				Y				G		I		U
A	S	T	I	R		P	R	O	V	I	N	C	E	S
D				O		I		U		S				T
E	S	T	A	M	I	N	E	T		T	I	T	L	E
X		E		A				N				O		R
A	G	A	I	N		L	A	U	D	A	N	U	M	
M		C		I		Y		M		T		R		A
P	L	A	C	A	R	D		B	A	T	T	I	N	G
L		R		N		I		E		I		S		E
E	F	T	S		F	A	B	R	I	C	A	T	E	S

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Last year, nearly 5,000 teens died in car crashes.

MAKING IT SAFER FOR A TEEN TO BE IN A WAR ZONE THAN ON A HIGHWAY.

There are few issues more in need of our united support than stopping the #1 killer of our nation's teenagers: car crashes. **While some states have tried individually to address this epidemic, Allstate believes that a federal law is needed to effectively reduce the number of teen driving deaths.**

SUPPORT THE STANDUP ACT OF 2009

The STANDUP Act* (H.R. 1895) creates a National Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law that: limits nighttime driving, reduces in-car distractions, puts a cap on the number of friends in the car and increases the required hours of training and supervision. **When states have implemented comprehensive GDL programs, the number of fatal crashes among 16-year-old drivers has fallen by almost 40%.**

Let's make sure the STANDUP Act doesn't get buried, or nearly 5,000 more teens could. Tell your congressional representatives that you support the STANDUP Act of 2009. **Go to allstate.com/STANDUP.**

It's time to make the world a safer place to drive. That's Allstate's Stand.

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*The STANDUP Act is the Safe Teen And Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act of 2009.

Sources: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety Fatality Facts 2006, 2007 (latest data available); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2008. The Cupped Hands logo is a registered service mark and "That's Allstate's Stand" is a service mark of Allstate Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL. © 2009 Allstate Insurance Company.

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